DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 613 PS 016 957

AUTHOR	Hamlin, Barbara B.
TITLE	Strategies to Build Collaboration with Parents, Preschool and Public School Personnel to Reduce Academic Stress.
PUB DATE	Jul 87
NOTE	145p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University. Portions of appended material contain marginally legible print.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Advocacy; *Cooperation; Coordination; *Day Care; Developmental Continuity; *Developmental Programs; Early Childhood Education; *Networks; *Parent Participation; Questionnaires; School Responsibility

ABSTRACT

The Children's Center, a combined public and private day care center in Connecticut, was the site of a practicum intervention which was rooted in the belief that day care centers have the responsibility to defend childhood, link preschools and public schools, and engage in political advocacy for children. Major goals of the intervention were to: (1) increase the number and quality of parent-staff contacts; (2) improve parent participation; (3) improve parent and staff understanding of developmental programing; (4) form an Early Education Council (EEC) to bridge the work of preschool and public school communities; and (5) build political advocacy to address child care needs. Evaluation data indicated that staff-parent contacts improved by almost 50 percent. Most parents approved the continuation of weekly meetings for an additional year. Staff extended their on-site training by conducting more workshops. The EEC recognized the need for mutual support and cooperation; planned to continue for another year; and aimed to help special needs children and lessen academic stress by providing additional developmental programs. Appendices provide related materials, which include parent survey and questionnaire forms. (Author/RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED287613

PRACTICUM

REPORT

Center for the
Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Strategies to Build Collaboration with Parents, Preschool and Public School Personnel to Reduce Academic Stress

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Barbara B.
Hamlin
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 016957

3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314
305/475-7300

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NOVA UNIVERSITY

OCT 6 - 1987

Strategies to Build Collaboration with Parents, Preschool and Public School Personnel to Reduce Academic Stress

by

Barbara B. Hamlin

Cluster XVI

Practicum Report Submitted to the Faculty
of the Early Childhood Program
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

July, 1987

PS 016957

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES v

LIST OF FIGURES vi

ABSTRACT vii

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION 1

Background Information 1
Community Information 4
Writer's Role and Responsibilities . 6

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM 9

Problem Statement 9
Problem Documentation 15
Problem Causes 18
Related Literature Review 21

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS 30

Statement of General Goals 30
Specific Objectives 32
Performance Objectives 32
Evaluation Instruments 32

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY 35

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions 35
Solution Selected 42
Calendar Plan for Implementation . . 49

V RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . 53

Results 53
Conclusions 87
Recommendations 99
Dissemination 100

PAGE

REFERENCES 102

Appendices

A DAILY LOG 108

B CONTACT SHEET 110

C QUESTIONNAIRE I 112

D QUESTIONNAIRE II 114

E PERCENT OF PRIMARY CAREGIVER CONTACTS BY TYPE FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS IN A SIX MONTH PERIOD 117

F PERCENT OF PRIMARY CAREGIVER CONTACTS BY TYPE FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS IN A SIX MONTH PERIOD 119

G PERCENT OF PRIMARY CAREGIVER CONTACTS IN SEPTEMBER BY TYPE FOR ALL AGE GROUPS . . . 121

H PERCENT OF PRIMARY CAREGIVER CONTACTS IN FEBRUARY BY TYPE FOR ALL AGE GROUPS . . . 124

I RATING SCALE FOR ONSITE WORKSHOPS 127

J PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM 129

K FINAL EVALUATION FORM 132

L CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAM 134

M PROCLAMATION FOR WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD . 136

N COOPERATIVE EDUCATION ARTICLE 138

O EARLY EDUCATION COUNCIL AGENDA 140

P STATE TASK FORCE - NEWS ARTICLE 142

LIST OF TABLES

Table PAGE

1 Frequency Distribution of T.G.I.F. Punch Attendance Over Six Months Across All Age Groups 54

2 Parent Response for Number of Desired Workshops 58

3 Sample of Data Collected on Contact Sheet 63

4 Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts by Type for Three-Year-Olds in a Six Month Period 65

5 Comparable Percentage of Primary Caregivers Contacts by Type for All Ages in September and February 67

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure PAGE

1 Percent of Parent Attendance at T.G.I.F. Punch Over Six Month Period . . . 56

2 Percent of Parent Attendance at T.G.I.F. Punch According to Class Group . 57

Abstract

Strategies to build collaboration with parents, preschool and public school personnel to reduce academic stress. Hamlin, Barbara B. 1987 Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Early Childhood Education.

Descriptors: Parent-teacher contact/parent-staff attitudes/preschool teacher development/child-centered curriculum/readiness/special education/developmental programs/preschool and public school collaboration/academic stress/political advocacy

This practicum focused on the need to address the academic stress on children in nursery schools, day-care and kindergarten and the new wave of 4-year-olds in the public school system. It recognized the need for better parent/staff partnership, better training for developmentally oriented programs, and the need to form a network to improve preschool and public school services.

The major goals were to: (1) increase the number and quality of parent-staff contacts; (2) improve parent partnership through social interaction; (3) improve parent-staff understanding of developmental programming; (4) form an Early Education Council to bridge the work between the preschool and public school community; (5) build political advocacy to address child care needs.

Staff/parent contacts improved by almost 50%. Weekly Friday gatherings had 83% parental approval to continue another year. Staff extended their onsite training by adding more workshops. The Early Education Council recognized the need for mutual support and cooperation, resolved to try to overcome natural hostilities, planned to continue another year, reinforcing special needs children and lessening academic stress by providing more developmental programs. The need for political advocacy was recognized.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The Children's Center is 1 of 106 state-funded day-care facilities in Connecticut. It is licensed by the State Department of Health; it operates under the guidelines of the State Department of Human Resources; and it is fiscally responsible to the State Income and Maintenance Department and to the town to which it is a delegate agent. The funded program for 30 children has been in operation for 16 years--the first 9 in a church faciilty, the past 7 in its own house bought and owned by the Board of Directors of The Children's Center.

Parallel to the state-funded program, the Center operates a private program in separate but adjoining space with its own budget, special services, staff and debts. These extra services, unlike the state-funded program which offers only all day-care for financially eligible working parents, provide broader facilities such as nursery school, before- and after-school programs, alternate kindergartens, half-day-care and snow-day-care.

The two programs, private and funded, are separate on paper and in some space. In reality, they overlap as children between the ages of 3 and 8 interact and share materials and staff. Some spaces, like the nursery school, are separate. The philosophy of the Center is not to separate or discriminate against children with economic differences. The nursery school children share many programs, trips and meals with others in the Center. The Children's Center, as the name implies, is for all children, not just for those living under poverty guidelines as the state's enrollments often require. Private and state-funded services find an enrollment of 80 children cared for by a combined staff of 15 and supervised by the director who founded the program in 1971.

The Children's Center's handsome Tudor home, surrounded by two well-equipped play yards, stands on a small hill which overlooks the town's center colonial green. Here the town hall, many stores, large churches, library and banks are the center of activity for the town's 20,000 population. The Children's Center belongs to this mainstream because it is within walking distance of these community services. The Center's children, 3 years and older, are a part of the library weekly reading program; they visit town hall to deliver material to the selectman's or the comptroller's office; they purchase equipment from the local stores; they make deposits at the bank and attend organ concerts during the week. The Center is also on the public school bus route. Families who must be at work before the school bus arrival bring their children to the Center where they are cared for until bus time. The after-school program buses children to the Center for much later family pickup.

The 11-hour day is spent in a homelike atmosphere. The smell of freshly cooked meals tantalizes teachers and children. The environment is aesthetically pleasing--prints of Mary Cassatt's paintings hang on uncluttered walls and music fills the air after lunch when rest time comes. It is a safe place to work and play, guarded from the road by fences on the outside and where all safety precautions are taken on the inside. It is comfortable even for the teachers who find a couch in each classroom a natural necessity. It is as accessible as the town in which it is located.

Money problems constantly intrude on the Center's operation. Neither state funding nor private fees can meet the $30,000 yearly deficit. Spring and fall fund drives try to resolve this issue as well as the constant search for grant money. In spite of deficits, in 1985-1986, a new addition was built. A large self-contained classroom with its own entrance, bathroom, art closet, cooking facilities, now houses the nursery school and the before- and after-school programs. This separate space allows bigger children more freedom of movement, more private space for belongings and storage space for materials more appropriate for their age. The new area offers space for night meetings with parents or other community personnel and much needed space for board meetings, now held in a multipurpose, smaller room with small chairs! The funds for this project have been partially committed by 100% of the Board of Directors. The balance due will be raised in a two-year capital drive.

Community Information

In the early 17th Century, pioneers and pilgrims in search of more land left the northern shores of Long Island, Milford and Stratford, Connecticut and pushed west through the untamed wilderness following the river road of the Housatonic. This interior highway led them to the fertile valleys and streams surrounding the base of Candlewood Mountain, an area already inhabited by the Waramaug Indians. In 1707, land was purchased from the Waramaug chief, thereby starting the New Milford Plantation to be approved five years later as a township.

A town meeting in 1721 responded to the request of 25 families to have a public school. The fertile land yielded crops of corn, rye and flax. Every considerable stream soon became dotted with small manufacturing operations. The mills for grist, lumber and flax shared new labor opportunities with mechanics, artificers and wheelwrights. Rivers were harnessed for water power and wood from the abundant forests provided fuel to fire smelters. Iron ore and limestone were found in abundance within the town's own borders (Orcutt, 1882).

By 1840, the railroad reached out from Bridgeport. Signs of the Industrial Revolution began to shift families from farms to factories. As long as tobacco flourished, agriculture and industry prospered side by side until farming could no longer compete with industry's higher wage or its profitable use of acreage. Tobacco, no longer profitable, shifted the economic balance to commerce and industry. The town struggled through growing pains until a new population explosion blasted natives from their self-sufficient, almost ingrown economic system, forcing them to adopt a broader view of industrial development in the form of export trade. The large tracts of flat land, river and railroad outlets attracted a new settler--the corporate giant. Nestle's Company came first, soon to be followed by Kimberly-Clark, Scoville and many more.

Today one finds less and less open land, an occasional skeleton outline of a tobacco barn as well as rivers polluted by industrial waste. Networks of highways bring many to the area with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds adding a new vitality and force to the traditional and closed setting. A few clapboard houses remain around the town's central green, but change and growth have disturbed the serenity of this New England village. Now the largest township in Connecticut, it continues to struggle for its identity and its place in the fast moving age of technology. Many children, no longer nourished by the church and the nuclear family, must find alternate care. Child care facilities, private and funded, are important community requirements.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer is the Director of The Children's Center and a former Head Start teacher. She has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Supervision from Bank Street College in New York City. Her responsibilities are many and varied. She must try to bring children's needs to public attention, try to gain financial support from the community itself, as well as the state and try to be a contributing advocate for the rights of children through legislative action on the state and local levels.

The specific jobs of the director are many and varied.

Financial responsibility: (a) monitor three state budgets and one private one; (b) be accountable to the state, the town (as delegate agent to the state) and to the Board of Directors; (c) coordinate state-funded and private programs keeping budgets separate yet programs overlapping; (d) supervise all fund drives; (e) apply for grants and special services; and (f) approve purchases for the school and supervise payroll.

Administrative responsibility: (a) report to the Board monthly on the financial and educational health of the Center; (b) participate as an ex-officio member on all Board committees; (c) assume responsibilities for staff recruitment, training and supervision and weekly staff meetings; (d) facilitate and encourage staff development through workshops, conferences and seminars; (e) evaluate programs and staff performances; (f) maintain student and staff records; (g) register all children; (h) contact parents daily and provide special conferences and parent meetings; (i) oversee food service for nutritional value and cost; and (j) constantly monitor house and grounds for safety factors.

Liaison work and public relations: (a) try to develop a bridge between preschool and the public school; (b) develop a network of preschool directors for developing goals for public awareness and support; (c) try to keep preschool news in the local newspaper through articles, pictures and interviews; and (d) prepare a slide show and deliver it to town organizations.

Personal commitment: (a) continue personal growth through participation in seminars, workshops and professional studies; (b) attend selected conferences; (c) be an advocate for children in the public forum; and (d) serve as board member on another day-care facility.

The Children's Center must represent the best in services for children and their families. It is the director's responsibility to see that it does. Public school pressure to lower the age of admission to the system is putting academic stress on the preschool child. Parents want their children ready for school and able to read and write before they have mastered the tricycle. It is the director's job to supervise a program suitable for preschool children which is fun and flexible, stimulating though serious, playful as well as purposeful. It is the Children's Center's job to defend childhood, to become a catalyst in the community between preschool educators and the public education system and to become an advocate for children in the political arena.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Statement

It is of national concern that child care needs, met and unmet, in preschool settings and public kindergarten, be addressed from the point of view of program content, environmental appropriateness and family support systems. There is serious concern that academic pressure is reaching down to 4- and 5-year-olds who are now taking their place in formal systems of education. Preschools and public schools are to be reminded that childhood must be protected and it is their duty to assure all young children the roots of a happy and secure childhood which will provide wings for all future learnings in a lifetime (Martin, 1986).

This town, like many others in the state, must address the issue of child care in the public system. It must be alert to children's needs and plan for appropriate environments. The academic emphasis, even as it exists in many kindergartens today, excludes the very essence of childhood where play, creativity and action are freely engaged in and where childhood offers an irresponsible apprenticeship to the serious business of life (Herron, Sutton-Smith, 1971).

Zigler (1986) suggests that the traditional conception of the school as the only location for learning must be expanded. A child learns about his world through play. Play assumes many different forms, can occur at any time, in any place and is a central activity of childhood.

There was a time before Sputnik when childhood and play were of primary importance and every child's right. There was a time, as Sutton-Smith (1971) described, when in England and America it required a social movement against the excesses of capitolism, in the Protestant countries, to release children from the bonds of work and confer the privilege of play. It is even possible that the institutionalizing of children's play was not formally secured until the formation of the Children's Charter of the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection which proclaimed "with the young child, his work is his play and his play is his work." The conference hailed the twentieth century as the century of the child. It stressed the importance of the whole child and the interrelatedness of his physical, mental, emotional and social development. It was the White House Conference of 1950 which drew on the work of Erikson that emphasis was made on the special contribution of the preschool years to later development. By the 1960's, the intellectual aspects of the young child's development were rediscovered and stimulation for the young child seemed of utmost importance. This rediscovery of childhood, with emphasis on its strategic role in later intellectual development, came at the same time that Sputnik highlighted the inadequacies of American public education--especially in math and science. Researchers looked for information on ways children learned to conceptualize.

The whole child cliche, as Almy (1966) called it, is perhaps due for revival or rediscovery. This she said twenty years ago. As families now wait for services for young children, it is important that public schools, day-care centers, nursery schools and home day-care providers understand the concept of "childhood" in order to provide the most appropriate environment for the "whole" child. As the professionalization of early childhood education, development and care through the public system begins to take place, parents of young children should not only know but demand a growing-up experience for children that is age appropriate and developmentally whole.

Children, voteless and dependent, can do nothing to provide environments which allow childhood to be nurtured. Parents and early childhood teachers can. The need for increased parental involvement is a variable that positively correlates with enhanced performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1983). The report states that a commitment to parent-school interaction in the early years through direct involvement, parent education and support, is effective in forming alliances, in recognizing family strengths and in minimizing serious educational problems.

Many well-meaning parents, anxious to push their children into the real (public) school or, possibly, even to use the public school as a smoke screen for free day-care, have little knowledge of developmental readiness. The idea of school readiness has caught parent and preschool teacher alike in formalizing early education programs and allowing those in charge (the public schools) to find fault with the consumer (C. Morado, 1986). Hurrying children is not new but the downward extension of it is (Elkind, 1982).

As pressure grows to formalize early education, so does the concern of the American Academy of Pediatricians who find a dramatic increase of stress related symptoms being seen in young children (Soderman, 1984).

Today's early childhood teachers find themselves in the position of having to defend play time for children to administrators and to parents (Elliot, 1986). Others find themselves falling into an academic pressure program that parents request and the public schools condone. With the certainty that public schools will be providers for preschool services in the near future through all-day kindergarten with extended care and with the enrollments of 4-year-olds in the system, it is necessary to plan now for provisions later. It is necessary for trained early childhood professionals and parents to promote developmental programs for early childhood in a variety of settings.

The local picture reflects the national concern for the need for more care for preschool children. A telephone poll taken of the local nursery schools, day-care centers and town social worker found over 100 children on waiting lists. There is reason to believe that there are many more unidentified children, as well as children of families moving into the area daily, who are not counted. As the local need grows, so does the pressure to find services in the public school where space might become available, where financial and administrative mechanisms are already in place and where teachers are already in the system.

This town has only half-day kindergarten but suggestions are being made by working mothers to have extended-day kindergarten and before- and after-school service provided by the public school system. Before that time arrives, it is important that early education teachers and administrators be invited to participate with the public school system to provide quality programs in the public system or on alternate sites. No cooperative work has taken place between the public system and the preschool community in this town.

Representatives of several nursery schools and day-care facilities attended the kindergarten orientation program. Here was described the pencil-workbook curriculum taught by a teacher of 22 - 24 students. The national pattern was reflected here in the academic pressure on young children. Some children, identified as unready children in this academic environment, are taken out of their kindergarten classroom in October or November and placed in a Pre-K (prekindergarten) class. There are 15 slots available. Here the teacher-child ratio is low - 2 to 15, materials are manipulative and emphasis on developmental growth replaces academic pressure. For children not ready to move into first grade, a transitional class is offered. Often, it is made up of children who start in the Pre-K. The transitional class also has low teacher-child ratio, manipulative materials and offers the gift of time (an extra year) to strengthen children's developmental needs before first grade begins.

Preschool teachers and administrators are concerned that an October or November kindergarten withdrawal and replacement of a child into a special class exposes the child to a sense of failure for which adjustment has to be made. They are concerned, too, that these special classes designed to help children "catch up" are really the models that the other kindergartens should follow. Developmental kindergartens would eliminate special placement for unready children.

Research shows that early stress on academics does not give children a long term competitive edge and may, in fact, create kindergarten burnout. The drive for academic instruction in preschool is largely fueled by peer pressure among parents who want their child to have every advantage. Preschools can play a part in preparing children to study academic subjects by nurturing their curiosity, encouraging them to lengthen their attention spans through activities and concepts that interest them. Harold Jaus of Purdue University (1987) warns that trying to get kids to be scholars before they are ready runs the risk of producing kindergarteners who are already turned off to school.

Problem Documentation

Locally, the waiting list in the nursery schools and child care centers continues to grow. Home day-care slots are unreportable because it has become an underground operation to avoid state involvement and insurance liability. A large network of home providers does exist but it remains separate and unaffiliated with any educational, political or support groups. There is no all day kindergarten in the public school. All preschool services work independently without a broad vision of participating in cooperative work with each other, with the public schools or in the political arenas.

Child care, wherever it is, is falling into the pressure trap of academic achievement which can take away something from agendas such as development of social skills. Gilmore and Uphoff (1986) quote Craig Rainey who said that early education may backfire, a sure prescription for trouble is making learning stressful. In the hurry to have children grow up to be prepared to enter formal schools, Elkind (1982) gives a warning: the hurried preschooler becomes the adolescent who feels betrayed by a society that tells him to grow up fast but denies him many adult prerogatives until he reaches a certain age. Should children be hurried up with no place to go or slowed down, taking time in early years to develop skills and emotional strengths so that they can manage anywhere? Preschool environments, whether sponsored by public schools or private sources, add to stress because of the different concepts of development and because of the emphasis placed on forms of knowledge in the broader society. The kinds of knowledge possessed by young children and their way of knowing have not been highly valued (Silin, 1985).

Public school and preschool personnel artificially separated by institutional boundaries do not coordinate or exchange information. Parents and teachers in either setting are not acquainted with developmental readiness and are unaware of warnings from Ames and Ilg (1979) who stated unequivocally that birthdays or chronological age is no guarantee of readiness for school. Transitional kindergarten and prekindergarten classes in the public school are responding to the needs of children not yet ready for the formal system.

Some 500,000 preschoolers in Connecticut under the age of 6 need care while parents work (Ward, 1984). This fundamental social change has made child care a basic need for the American family.

In June of 1985, the Connecticut State Board of Education was presented with a report of a two-year study on 4-year-olds and their families. The report was commissioned by Gerald Terrozzi, State Commissioner of

Education. It suggested that state departments must be committed to supporting a range of services to meet the diverse needs of young children, to give parents the right of choice for these services, as well as the choice of time of public school enrollment and to all children--the right to childhood.

Problem Causes

Human development incorporates and integrates intellectual, social, emotional and physical domains and many institutions including schools, the community and the media, affect children's growth (Zigler and Kagan, 1982). The threat of the disappearance of childhood from the lives of children, now being invited into the public school system at the age of 4, has become a national issue. Edward Zigler, at the Yale Conference for Schooling for 4-Year-Olds (1986), agreed that the preschool curriculum must stop pressurizing the young to be product oriented, to conform, to be passive recipients of complex stimuli instead of being an active influence with peers, adults and the environment. Zigler, Sterling professor of psychology at Yale, warned that we are driving our young children too hard, pushing them too fast and thereby depriving them of their most precious commodity--their childhood (N.Y. Times, 1986). Rather than viewing preschool programs as a downward extension of formal schooling, they should be considered as upward extensions of family and day-care where the concept of child development sets the parameters, goals and philosophy.

Honig (1986) researched interpersonal stressors between parents and children and the buffering factors that increase children's resistance to stress. The increase in stress for children is evident in the growing awareness of child abuse, increase in poverty and single parent families. When risk factors are multiple, quality early childhood programs can improve children's lives. Honig sees enriched child care as a special support for families. Defending time for childhood play-time allows children under stress to work through their coping skills, helps children reframe their negative thoughts and feelings through the use of gentle humor and involves parents so they feel a preschool could provide a buffering social support for their families.

Demographic, economic and social trends in the past decade have left children without political forces working in their behalf. As political leverage on children's behalf declines, new demands for public services for them have increased. These unmet needs are complicated and are of great magnitude including the need for day-care, health services and for special efforts in the public school. Harold Howe II, senior lecturer at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, reminds us that the United States is the wealthiest nation in the world but whose political will to provide its children with the necessities for physical, intellectual, emotional and moral growth is weakening. This is made dramatically clear in the national budget which records a 6 billion dollar loss for child programs in the next four years and a possible loss of 33 billion if some reform measures are not taken (Howe, 1986).

The Children's Center, along with the other preschools in the community, is feeling the parent pressure for an academic curriculum, is aware of the limited space for unready children in the public school pre-k program and finds a lack of educational partnership between the public school teachers, preschool teachers and administrators. Each guard their own territory making the transition for the child and parent more difficult to move from one experience to another. The continuum of learning experiences for children are often not smooth but rather abrupt and even uncomfortable at times because the preschool and public school environments do not mesh.

The Center is concerned about the lack of parent-teacher interaction. Parents anxious to get their children into the public school have not understood or been exposed to developmental needs of children. Parents and staff do not communicate well and educational goals are not shared. Parents drop off their children without coming into the Children's Center building and pick them up at the end of the day usually in a great hurry and without staff contact.

The Center is aware of the lack of national, state or local priority for child care. It realizes that local attention must be drawn to children's needs, that the political process is a necessary avenue to travel for support and that state and national policies often begin in small towns where people, like parents, teachers and local legislatures can begin to make a difference in the lives of children.

Related Literature Review

There are many explanations for the growing interest in early childhood education. Morado (1986) suggests that educational reformers sometimes look to early childhood programs as a solution for complex educational and social problems that have not been solved by other means.

A national debate is developing, according to the New York Times (1986), over how young children should be taught. Some public schools have opened their doors to 4-year-olds and exposed programs accustomed to using text books, lectures and stressing academic skills. Some nursery schools, also academically oriented, are feeders into this formal system. The Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, sponsored a two-day conference (1986) on Schooling for 4-Year-Olds where concern over the content of preschool programs was evident. Ed Zigler and David Weikart both opposed placing young children in cognitively oriented preschool education programs where back to basics is the enemy. Weikart referred to the Perry Project in Ypsalanti, Michigan. Here, the longitudinal study of a Head Start program showed that preschool programs with play as the learning vehicle make a difference in later life. The Perry Preschool Project, a comprehensive program started in 1960, identified the long-term effects of preschool on low income children (Berruta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein & Weikart, 1984).

Anne Soderman (1984) clearly states that making formal education available to all 4-year-olds should occur only because we believe it would enhance the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and quality of life for those children at a particular stage of life in which they are to be enrolled in a program. Often educational practice is not handled with developmental concerns of children in mind. Pressure groups with vested interests and economically driven or church groups or legislative groups all wage their ideological wars.

Opponents to the idea of public sponsorship of preschool education suggest hidden agendas such as using the public taxes to fund day-care for millions of children under 5, providing a safe place for abused and neglected children, providing a nurturing and healthful environment for children of the poor, filling empty classrooms, providing stable environments for children of working parents or those of parents in the process of separation, divorce and remarriage and formalizing the wide varieties of already existing preschool programs. A comprehensive network of day-care must support a few of the above mentioned arguments but certainly more and better reasons must be found before instituting national pre-primary education and risking the loss of childhood through academic pressure.

Dr. Lynn Kagan's introductory remarks at the Bush Center's conference questioned whether 4-year-old schooling would be serving children in isolation, excluding the family. At the same conference, Dr. Evelyn Moore augmented the need for parent participation in policy and curriculum. That interaction with and the incorporating of parents in the preschool program will help meet the needs of young children unlike the public school tradition. Dr. Moore encouraged parental involvement which would include nutrition and health care services (N.Y. Times, May 27, 1986). Gwen Morgan's (1985) needs list for programs for young children must include parents as welcomed and respected partners.

Parent partnerships with preschool practitioners was stressed in the State report on 4-year-olds and their families. The more knowledgeable responsible adults can be concerning their preschool children, their needs and programming for them, the more hope for gains in the quality of life in later years. However, Knitzer (1972) makes clear the obstacles in parent involvement in the past included the professional staff of preschools and public schools who functioned as gatekeepers and worked under a misguided notion that parents know little or nothing about children. Parents are seen as a nuisance and the role of the professional is to be the expert because they have a body of knowledge the parents do not have. Knitzer warns that staff members might be giving to parents a double-bind message: they seek out and support parent interest at the same time that they really feel that parents have nothing to contribute and could even, in some ways, endanger the program.

Katz (1980) suggest that mutual support among parents and staff is impossible in the context of negative attitude or conflicts (from either side). A study on Attitudes of Care Givers and Day-care Experiences of Families (Kontos S., Well W., 1986) found a difference in high-group mothers, better educated and married, than the low-group mothers, less education and single, in their concept of day-care. The reasons for the difference centered on three areas: quality of child rearing techniques, frequency and type of communication and adherence to center policies and regulations. The study showed that staff held in high esteem parents whose child rearing practices were thought of as being positive, less authoritarian and who showed interest in improving their parenting. These parents talked willingly and frequently to staff. Parents whose child rearing abilities were held in low esteem by staff were thought of negatively and, in addition, they paid late, dressed children in improper clothing, got angry over center policy--especially sick child removal during the working day. The study described two very distinct groups of parents and the low level of contact for low-group mothers and their satisfaction with it. Replication of part of this study is of interest as an effort is made to improve the number of parent contacts at the Children's Center as well as the type of communication exchanges.

It is necessary to be more concerned with program content for preschool children, for maximizing parent involvement and for collaboration efforts with the public school. Parents who have increased knowledge and awareness of appropriate developmental program content for preschool children will also have redefined readiness understanding and behavioral expectancies.

Interest in early childhood education is not always for the benefit of the child. Social and economic problems are spawning preschool services. One must question the quality of preschool services to make sure that children's developmental needs are met, that play as a vehicle for learning replaces academic pressure. Parents and teachers together must share educational goals. Public schools and preschool services must form a network to support each child's right to a childhood experience. Teachers, parents and administrators must work as advocates for children. Zigler and Kagan (1982) advise early education councils to provide a means for coordinating and exchanging information uniting public school personnel and preschool providers which are now artificially separated by institutional boundaries. Together they could speak for children. Who else will?

The literature suggests great concern for the hurried child, for the pressured programmed preschool and kindergarten youngster and for the academically oriented programs for 4- and 5-year-olds.

The Children's Center decided to accept the warnings of Almy, Ames, Zigler, Kagan and others that today's children are under too much academic pressure. An effort to deformalize early education is planned through staff development and retraining efforts to move from a direct-instruction approach to child-initiated activities. The principles of child-initiated activities are developmentally appropriate because they match children's interests and abilities.

Parents are encouraged to place more value on children's independence and self-initiated activities. The shift of parent values from the 1950's, when obedience and good manners were highly valued, is due to changes in society, the increased female labor force, the increase in single parent families, urbanization, and changing attitudes toward child rearing. Parent-to-parent programs, which have been introduced in some states, forge a strong community peer support group for parents who feel overwhelmed with responsibility of raising a family in today's complex society. Locally the effort is to form a parent-staff partnership. Some educational and economic backgrounds are involved. However, the majority of research seems to approve of such a partnership which becomes effective through staff efforts, combined workshops and mutual playtimes with the children.

The attempt to provide an unstressful, play oriented environment cannot be made in isolation. Other preschools, day-care centers, as well as public school personnel, must agree on the fundamental principles of developmental programs for young children. An attempt must be made to break down the existing separations and institutional boundaries. Zigler and Kagan (1982) suggest that such a group or council will share information, provide a continuum of education based on a cooperative approach to the developmental needs of the young children in the community. This council will meet monthly to share concerns over issues such as age of children's enrollment into public school, support systems for the child with special needs and the use of alternate locations for learning by the public school system.

Research also suggests the need for political advocacy for children's services is paramount. Early educators and parents have felt inadequate in the political arena. It is necessary, through parent groups, early education councils and other community leaders, to address the needs of preschool children before the public schools define the environments for 4-year-olds in the public system. It is necessary to look beyond the local level to the state and national levels where funding decisions will dictate not only the available services for children, but the quality of them as well.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The purpose of this practicum was to examine four aspects of the preschool/kindergarten setting:

1. the learning environment;
2. the role of parents in a partnership with teachers;
3. the articulation between preschool agencies and the public school system and, finally;
4. the need for advocacy for quality child care programs on the local, state and national levels.

The practicum was based on the assumption that there is more to early learning than cognitive development (Haiman, 1986), that maturation and environment, not teaching, is the critical factor for stages of mental organization, that children's play, often depreciated by adults, is an essential component of healthy development (Almy, 1986). An assumption of this study was that a good relationship between teacher and parent will result in cooperation and better communication, thus ensuring consistency between the child's home and the preschool experience (Galinsky, 1986). The last assumption was that partnership with public schools will result in better services for preschool and kindergarten children and their families, that special-needs children will get a better support and reinforcement program.

OBJECTIVES FOR CENTER	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR CENTER	EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS FOR CENTER
1. Encourage parent partnership.	1. - All parents must come into the Center to deliver/pick up children. Expect 100% response to sign-in/sign-out sheet.	1. - Attendance record to get percentage of attendance.
	- Open House (Fall) attracting 50% of parents, 100% of teachers.	- Correlate attendance sheet to see if goal was met.
	- TGIF Parent Punch 50% attendance of eligible parents.	- Questionnaire number II has specific question to decide the continuum of TGIF or not. Check parent response.
2. Network with other preschools.	2. - Explore common needs in monthly meetings.	2. - End of year consensus whether to continue the Early Education Council.
	- Provide first town celebration for Week of the Young Child.	- Examine public support from Town Hall, the press, and the public school.
3. Encourage collaboration with the public school.	3. - Invite public school personnel to Early Education Council with preschool directors.	3. - Report on response of attendance from minutes of meeting.
	- Arrange for classroom observation exchange between public and preschool teachers.	- Objective met through scheduled visits.
	- Provide support and reinforcement to at least one child assessed by the public school as "at risk".	- Public school acceptance of alternate service thru enrollment and payment to Center for special services supervised by the public school for one child.

OBJECTIVES FOR TEACHERS	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS	EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS FOR TEACHERS
1. Improve own understanding of developmental growth.	1. - Expect 66% attendance on special in-house workshops.	1. - Evaluate the two participant feedback forms: one for an individual session and of the series of workshops.
2. Improve numbers of contacts and communication with parents.	- Use contact sheet to record number of contacts with parents over a six month period hoping to improve it by 25%. Use a contact sheet to record quality of contacts over six month period hoping to improve it by 25%.	- Correlate and tally charts which recorded monthly and six month period for all ages: - number of contacts - quality of contacts
	- Attended 1 of 3 parent/teacher workshops.	- Attendance and informal feedback from staff meetings as to the quality of the presentation.
3. Share in audience participation in Cultural Series for children.	3. - Participate fully in all special programs.	3. - Make qualitative judgement by staff of children's participation, quality of progress.

OBJECTIVES FOR CHILDREN	PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN	EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS FOR CHILDREN
1. Expose preschool children to live performances in the arts to encourage active audience participation.	1. - 100% attendance at all performances.	1. - Qualitative judgement made by teachers in staff meetings and consensus to continue series the following year.
2. Provide supplementary services for special needs children identified "at risk" by the public school.	2. - Provide support and reinforcement service to at least one child assessed by the public school as "at risk".	2. - Qualitative response from parent and public school to service offered through PPT meetings, informal questioning and recommendations for the following year.
3. Mainstream a handicapped child to promote understanding, compassion and patience.	3. - Provide natural classroom room exposure one morning a week for Center children with a handicapped child.	3. - Informal evaluation from teacher, parent, and aide of benefits for handicapped child and Center children.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The incorporation of kindergartens into public schools has been influenced by educational trends stressing conformity, academic readiness and behavioral objectives. In the 1960's, the new interest in technical knowledge and social equity led to the popularity of the more cognitively-oriented programs. These led to questioning the traditional emphasis on socio-emotional growth and the immediate interest of the child. Computers, now used with young children, suggest the intensification of a technocratic approach to curriculum which one day might effect the quality of children's experiences in schools (Cuffaro, 1984).

Almy (1975) said that our tradition includes a concern for social reform, stress on the special qualities of the young child and various attempts to change the nature of elementary education. Now, twelve years later, it is not just kindergarten in the public school system but many 4-year-olds who will join them and children in alternate child care sites that will be affected by the direction that early education takes. If one agrees with Almy that young children have special qualities, then the position statement on Developmentally

Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Practice, published by the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) (1986), must be examined. It clearly states that the trend toward early academics is antiethical to what we know about how children learn. It stresses play as a primary vehicle and indicator of children's mental growth. It says that child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate practice. Children are not passive observers--they move, manipulate and explore things in their world. Caplan (1974) claimed play as the highest form of research.

Types of play that enhance self-esteem and sense of identity are almost limitless. Through play a child addresses tasks that can be mastered easily and in small steps in order to build competence. Often, children under stress are victims of rigid and high expectation so they are always doomed to failure when it comes to accomplishment (McFadden, 1986).

Playfulness, so natural to the young child, if allowed to flourish without unnecessary restrictions, must be supplemented by adults. Rheingold (1982) suggested that adults be a model of playfulness, that they play with children and that they watch children play to learn about their likes and dislikes, favorite themes and interests. If adults could accept children's permission to play, they might find out as John Holt (1972) suggests, that playing is as important for teachers and parents as it is for children. However, one must engage in it, not supervise it. Movements in California such as Playfair, led by Matt Weinstein (1980), demonstrate that adult play provides an experience of community that is lacking in society generally. Spolin (1963), too, through her theatre games, tries to provide an experience where it is possible to create a sense of unity of purpose, of connection to other, of belonging. In her operational structures, she states that games and exercises place persons into active relation with one another. Theatre games are a vehicle for teachers to bring roles together as teacher, observer and participant and to see herself as a person in relation to the children. The concept of theatre games is that solving theatre games, like personal problems of fear and resistance, though not identified, dissolve through actions in the game. Dr. Bernstein (1979) describes theatre game workshops as providing a context which facilitates transformation--that of persons engaged in actual relationship with one another in the spirit of mutuality. Workshops such as these are playful and a help in a system and structure of our culture which often fosters isolation, competition, personal survival, passivity and conformity.

An interesting study done by Rothlein and Brett and reported in the Early Childhood Research Quarterly (1987) discusses children's, teachers' and parents' perception of play. The majority of teachers did not view play as an integral part of the curriculum. Parents did not support having their children spend a large amount of time in play during preschool. The parents and teachers of children 2 to 6 years of age did not view play as the way children learn. Parents and teachers seemed to be separating play and learning into a dichotomy: children either played or learned. Early education teachers who have embraced Piagetian theory believe that preoperational children learn through active involvement and interaction with the environment which is facilitated through play. The study found it not surprising that the lack of interest in play in preschool settings leads to concern about emphasis on academic skills and the affect it might have on the total development of children. Bettelheim (1987) said that the child learns that, to his parents, play itself is not very important. He also states that educational toys become deadly when the child is expected to learn what they are designed to teach rather than what he wants to know.

By emphasizing cognition in early childhood education, teachers are not presenting an accurate picture of children and their world. From the point of view of children's developmental needs, the most important dynamics of life are emotional and social. Cognitive life is secondary based upon and generated from the child's affective and interpersonal experiences (Haiman, 1986).

A report on Preschool Programs (1986) states that while most state-funded prekindergarten programs focus on teaching only the child, Minnesota and Missouri are taking a different approach. They are trying to help parents be good teachers of their children. These two states are the only states to place as much emphasis on teaching parents about child development as nurturing the child's progress.

A great benefit of the Minnesota program as critiqued by early childhood researcher, Irving Lazar (1982), is that it re-establishes a learning partnership between parent and child that public schools have destroyed in the past century.

The Missouri program is turning out parents who take an active interest in their children's education. The parents even warned elementary school principals that they had better watch out for a new breed of parents who want to participate in their children's learning and who are inquisitive about how the public schools are teaching children!

Both programs are based on research and evidence that parents are the best teachers of their preschool-age children and, therefore, should be trained to encourage learning and recognize problems in their child's development.

These findings agree with Caplan (1983) who stated that early childhood education programs generally do more to link the home and school than do the public schools. It is suggested that familiarizing parents with the milestones that children reach and pass through in their whole development and sharing with them the ages and stages of early childhood, a support system will have been constructive. Through this partnership parents will better tolerate and cope with their children's demands, trying behavior, health and physical requirements and developmental growth, especially on the social emotional level.

Helping parent and teacher extend time for children to grow up by heightening their awareness for providing an appropriate stressless environment cannot stop in the home, the day-care center or in the public school. The effort must reach into the political arena where monies and their allotment make or break social and educational programs.

This year, Washington approved funding to begin a demonstration effort for early childhood development programs. Connecticut's few preschool advocates applied for similar funding but it was not accepted by the legislature. However, political awareness of preschool needs is growing slowly and there will be new efforts in this state to seek funding for demonstration or model preschool community programs. Nancy Johnson, Congresswoman from Connecticut, has introduced the Child Care Act of 1986 creating new day-care programs and much needed access to affordable day-care services. She feels that a new approach to day-care at the federal level will fill a serious void in current policy. It is necessary to increase involvement in advocacy efforts at all levels.

The Head Start legislation and the veto of the Child Development Act have made some people aware of the effects of public policy on the work with children. Federal budget cutting efforts affect children's programs in spite of the growing recognition of the importance of public policy in this field. Local advocacy efforts have not been effective.

Solution Selected

The four areas of concern involving the Center: environment, the parents, the public schools, the political community were the focus of this practicum.

Staff were given the principles of developmental curriculum through their own onsite workshops, through attendance at appropriate outside seminars, by exposure to Gesell's readiness assessment from Children's Center sponsored staff-in-training, by reviewing the child development credentialling and the position statements of appropriate programs for preschoolers as sanctioned by the NAEYC (1986).

Arrangements were made with the public schools to allow preschool teacher observation time in the kindergarten classes. Public school personnel explained the concept of readiness for incoming kindergarten children at a special staff-parent evening meeting held at the Center.

A series of workshops was planned for parents to help them understand developmental readiness and to offer them the option of withholding a child from public school kindergarten instead of enrollment in transitional classes for the unready child. Workshops included (1) parents and preschool teachers looking at the potentials of preschool children in a developmental environment,

(2) a workshop for parents and preschool teachers on stress, (3) a parent-oriented seminar by a public school kindergarten teacher to help the transition for parent and child from preschool to public school. Parents learned that options do exist for their child's education and they, the parent, are the deciding agent, not the public schools, as to the readiness of their child for formalized education programs.

Staff and parents were encouraged to be more communicative. Both must recognize that each has a role--vital, but different and that together they accomplish more than twice as much.

At the beginning of the school year, a newsletter went to all parents which stated that this year was the year of the parent! The first contact form was presented. This was a sign-in/sign-out sheet for the parent or other designated person who picked up or delivered children to the Center. This was placed inside the entrance to the school. Parents had to come inside to bring or pick up their child, sign their name and time of arrival or departure (see Appendix A). The second contact sheet was placed in the teacher's room. Here the teacher or aide marked each time the child's parent was greeted and recorded what kind of a greeting it was (see Appendix B).

The second step began on the first Friday of September when a parent T.G.I.F. (Thank Goodness It's Friday) punch party was launched. The nearest large room to the school's entrance was used to collect weekly fees, to provide the sign-in/sign-out sheet and to socialize with parents and any siblings who came along. The head teacher and/or the director with the help of several kindergarten children made the punch, decorated a table from which to serve and provided snacks if a kitchen search was successful. Although some parents would not be available because of earlier departure, it was decided to start serving at 4:00 p.m. Children volunteered to host or to be "runners" to find the child for the parent who was by then signing out and paying. Parent and child were served punch together. As weeks went on, chairs which were stacked away were brought out and used by families who began to make a less hurried exit from the Center. The paying desk had a grown-up chair which made many a tired working mother comfortable.

A special family outing was held in June, an open house in the Fall and three joint workshops in the evening with staff. Teachers sent home newsletters bi-monthly. Parents were given two questionnaires, one in the Fall, one in the Spring, which asked for the evaluation of the school's program and, in particular, the experience of their own child at the Center (see Appendixes C and D).

A fourth parent-teacher workshop was planned to help adults engage in play and playfulness. Dr. Bernstein's theatre game workshop was to help participants become actively related to one another in and through games. This plan could not be carried out because the expense was beyond the means of the Center.

Beyond the environment of the Children's Center was a network of other preschools, nursery schools and day-care centers. All the directors were invited to form a group which would examine issues concerning early education, become a support system for each other and, possibly, sharing resources or personnel. This group took the first step in closing the separation between themselves and the public school system by inviting public school personnel to join and to form an early education council.

The council acknowledged the important role that public schools and preschools play so that together the services for children will be enriched. Staff development could be supported through combined workshops and conferences.

The council attempted to bridge the work done for children in preschools and public schools. Mutual concerns for appropriate support systems for special-needs children attending both schools were addressed.

The council was responsible for publishing a parents handbook, a means by which all families would be able to understand developmental readiness, preschool potential, the necessity of a play-filled childhood and listing local resources for child care in many settings. Hatfield and Sheehan (1986) suggest that parent manuals are a statement to the community and can be distributed to key agencies, offices, personnel directors of local companies and the medical community.

The council coordinated the efforts of preschool professionals and families they serve by offering resources, support system and political advocacy for proper legislation to insure that all preschool children's needs for childhood experience is a national priority. Members of the council were to make sure that names, addresses and phone numbers of key local, state and national representatives are circulated and used for advocating proper legislation for the benefit of children.

Improvement in local political involvement for children's issues is the first step toward addressing policies on the state and federal levels. Publications from the Children's Defense Fund, the Child Care Action

News, newsletters from Representative Johnson and Senator Dodd and the state legislative update are made available to parents and council members. Bulletin boards at the Center advise parents of needed political activity such as write-in campaigns.

It was of great interest to attend some of the social policy luncheons at the Bush Center of Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. Child care policy and practice continue to reflect our fundamental ambivalence toward the role of government, the rights and responsibilities of families, the proper role of women and the importance of children. Fern Marx (1987) wrote: "While there is little question that a significant federal involvement is necessary to address the nation's need for high quality early childhood programs, efforts at the state and local levels remain central to building successful approaches to serving the complex needs of today's families."

Involvement, commitment and advocacy will answer Caldwell's (1977) question: "If the field does not speak, to whom will policy makers listen?" This preschool council becomes the vehicle on the local level to make change on behalf of young children, families and childhood professionals.

A preschool council in a small town becomes an influential advocacy group dedicated to make a difference in the lives of all children. Preschool advocates representing private and public resources can work toward the prerequisites to the formation of any public policy as suggested by Zigler and Finn (1981), that citizens must have a sense of immediacy of the problem and there must be a broad based lobby working to support the formation of the policy.

As more information is transmitted from the council to parents, they too will become involved in advocacy efforts and, hopefully, it will dispel the fear of the political process and lack of confidence in their own expertise (Lombardi, 1986). Parents might suggest adding a representative on the Board of Education from the preschool population.

Parent power in the political arena must increase as long as political priority systems undervalue and undersupport programs which emphasize effective parenting skills, developmental day-care and child care services in general (Honig, 1975). It is also necessary to increase involvement in advocacy efforts on the local, state and national levels in defense of childhood since public school efforts to gather in 4-year-olds has become a national issue.

CALENDAR

July

- * Get Board approval to underwrite staff Gesell training cost.
- * Staff member enrolled in Gesell workshop.

August

- * Theatre party and picnic - staff, children and parents (August 15, 1987).
- * Staff member at Gesell Institute for training in screening (3 days).
- * Interview Superintendent of schools.
- * Interview two elementary school principals.
- * Staff workshop (August 28 & 29) explaining this year's emphasis on parent involvement, developmental curriculum.
- * Write grant proposal for Cultural Series for children.

September

- * Instigate sign in/sign out sheet.
- * Questionnaire to parents (1 of 2).
- * Open House for parents.
- * Implement staff/parent contact sheet.
- * Instigate T.G.I.F. Parent Punch every Friday p.m.
- * Invite preschool directors to meet.
- * Be represented on the South Western Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (SWCAEYC).

October

- * Continue Friday T.G.I.F. Punch.
- * Parent/teacher workshop.
- * Meeting with preschool directors and interested public school personnel.
- * Contact sheet continued.
- * Plan Cultural Series.

November

- * Contact sheet continued.
- * Continued T.G.I.F. Punch.
- * Thanksgiving Feast: Invite special guests in community.
- * Early Education Council (EEC) meets.

December

- * Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- * Contact sheet continued.
- * Sing Christmas caroles to Town Hall, merchants.
- * Community outreach program.
- * Contact Prof. to lead staff workshops (3).
- * Contact Assistant Principal for public school workshop invitation next August.
- * CampFire proposal for curriculum with parent aid at the end.

January

- * Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- * Contact sheet continued.

January (continued)

- Staff workshop on developmental curriculum (1 of 3).
- EEC meets.

February

- Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- Continue contact sheets.
- Staff workshop (2 of 3). Guest speaker on stress.
- Theatre games workshop - parents.

March

- Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- Preschool directors meeting.
- Contact media for press coverage, "WOYC."
- Plan for Week of the Young Child.
- Plan for public school prekindergarten observations.
- Review EEC direction with Superintendent of Schools.

April

- Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- Staff workshop (3 of 3). Unhurried child.
- Week of the Young Child.
- Public school observations at private and funded centers.
- Questionnaire of parents (2 of 2).
- Parent-teacher workshop.
- Parent-public school orientation.

May

- Continue T.G.I.F. Punch.
- Decide on evaluation form for kindergarten children.
- SWCAEYC dinner at Center.
- Collect questionnaire from parents - correlate (2 of 2).
- EEC meets.

June

- Two Fridays of Punch.
- Parent/staff/child park picnic - Summer, June 19.
- Report on Cultural Series to Grant Foundation.
- Newsletter to parents: discuss questionnaire results.
- Final meeting of EEC. Plan for summer workshop with public school.
- Growing up celebration for next year's kindergarteners.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This practicum was designed to engage parents in an educational partnership with their children's preschool teachers, to support all preschool agencies in a developmental approach for early education and to cooperate with the public school system in an attempt to bring more collaborative work between the now separated agencies. It also recognized the need for political awareness for child care issues.

Results

The sign-in/sign-out sheet had 100% compliance. The fact that parents came into the Center made them more accessible to the staff. An unexpected positive result was the parents' enthusiastic approval of this procedure. It reassured them that their child would not be picked up or brought in by anyone other than authorized personnel. The demand for a signature increased the parents' feeling of safety for their child. It remains a standard procedure.

Attendance taken at the T.G.I.F. parent punch parties recorded its success. The 20-week study showed a range of attendance from 1 week to 16 weeks (see Table 1). The median number of days of attendance was nine. Half of the total group of parents in attendance participated ten times or more. All but one eligible parent came at least once. The percentage of attendance was found by dividing the possible attendance (parents who came from 4:00 p.m. on) by actual attendance.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of T.G.I.F.
Punch Attendance Over Six Months

No. of Days Attended	No. of Parents	No. of Days Attended	No. of Parents
16	X	8	X
15	XXX	7	XX
14	XXX	6	XX
13	XX	5	XX
12	XXX	4	X
11	XXXX	3	XXX
10	XXX	2	XXXXX
9	XXXX	1	X

The projected goal was to have 50% parent involvement. The results far exceeded the goal (see Figure 1). Response from Parent Questionnaire II was overwhelming. Of a possible 28 responses, 20 parents (83%) wanted T.G.I.F. to continue on a weekly basis, 4 suggested monthly parties and 4 did not answer.

Parents and children of the state-funded program were evenly divided (see Figure 2). They joined with private paying families and parents and children of the before- and after-school program. It was an easy mix. All groups had the same responsibility to sign out, to pay and to share food and drink together.

The punch party was very successful but other attempts to create parent involvement were not. Three workshops were offered to promote understanding the stress-related living of parent and child and to explain expectations of the public school for incoming kindergarten students as well as the Children's Center's philosophy not to provide an academically stressful program.

Parents' responses to Questionnaires I and II showed clearly the lack of desire to have workshops (see Table 2). It is important to remember that all figures quoted were derived from data gathered from the state-funded and private day-care programs only. The nursery school

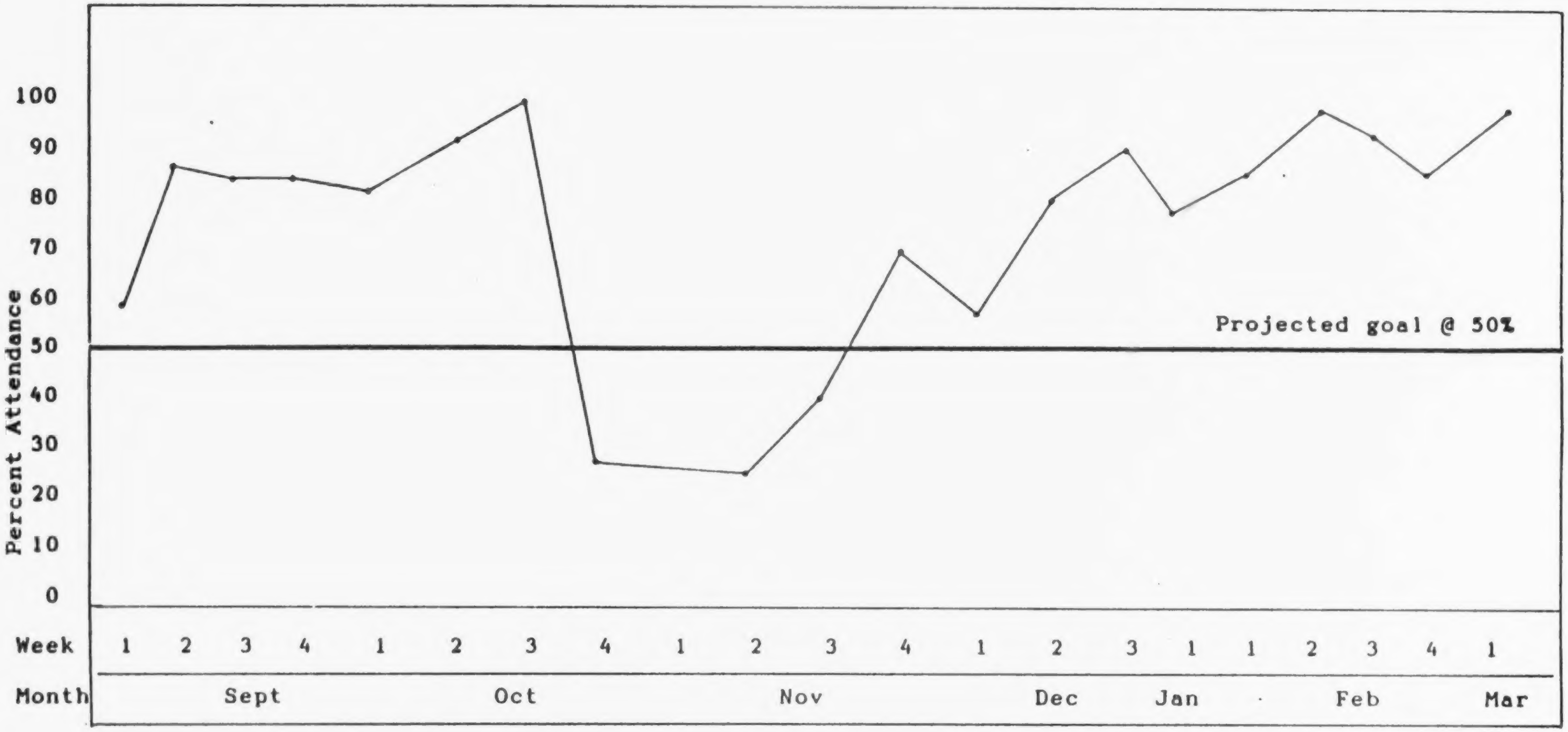

Figure 2 Percent of Parent Attendance at TGIF Punch Over Six-Month Period

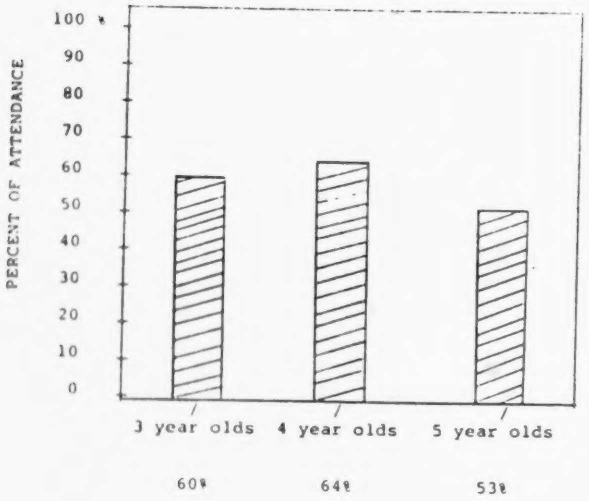

Figure 2

Percent of Parent Attendance at T.G.I.F. Punch According to Class Group parents responded to this questionnaire in a more positive manner, but their tally was not included.

Table 2

Parent Response for No. of Desired Workshops

No. of Workshops	Questionnaire I	Questionnaire II
3	.04%	.04%
2	64%	15%
1	39%	26%
0	0	56%

The attendance record at the workshops found one parent from the 3-year-old group, four from the 4-year-old group and five from the 5-year-old group. All but one of those parents were high repeat participants (over 50%) at T.G.I.F. punch parties. It seems a logical assumption that awareness and encouragement for participation were promoted in the relaxed, informal atmosphere of the Friday gatherings.

The three parent-staff workshops were held at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments were offered early and the presentations started at 7:15. The first one discussed the preschool child's potential by a Nova doctoral student who was visiting in the area. Eight staff members came and 16 parents from the Children's Center.

Four teachers came from other preschools. There was lively questioning and the whole area of readiness was explored. The atmosphere was relaxed and the outside speaker was given excellent verbal comments when the director asked the opinions of the Center's participants the following day. Thirty is considered a good attendance. It should be noted that the percentage of staff member attendance was much higher than that of the parents.

The second workshop was led by the Director of the Mental Health Clinic who gave an excellent presentation on the stresses of parenting and the stress on children in today's working parent environment. Again the staff was remarkably supportive by having eight in attendance. Seven parents came from the day-care program and five from the nursery school. Parents were evenly distributed representing 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. Twenty-one stayed until after 9:00 p.m. There was much enthusiasm about the stress test which was taken by everyone. People wanted to take it to their workplaces.

The final workshop was given by the public school teacher of the pre-K program. This was designed to acquaint parents of children going into public school the following Fall to the expectations of the public school. A nonacademic, developmental approach was sanctioned.

Five staff members and 11 parents were participants. This was a disappointing number of parents because the emphasis in all parent conferences, contacts and newsletters was on children's developmental readiness, not cognitive skills as the criteria for school entrance. It is possible that the lack of interest by less educated and single parent mothers (50%) on the state-funded program replicates the study done by Kontos and Well, (1986) who found different attitudes between high-group mothers, represented by the nursery school program (better educated and married) and the low-group mothers. However, though numbers attending were poor, an excellent voluntary witnessing was made by a parent who had held her child back from kindergarten because he was not ready. She spoke with passion about his success the following year when he started public school. She urged parents not to hurry their children. She offered to be available to anyone who wished to talk to her about the difficulties in making such a decision.

The presenter described her pre-K program as developmental, with two staff members and 15 children in a large room with manipulative materials but warned that 15 slots did not guarantee a placement for all children who needed more time. She described the other kindergartens as academically-oriented with workbooks and pencil work.

A Fall open house was held which was of interest to parents of 3- and 4-year-olds. Attendance was not taken but a rough count from staff members who acted as hosts suggested about 28 families were represented. Three showings of Mr. Pazoo, the language development puppet, were demonstrated. This was very popular because children had spoken to parents about the puppet. Parents were treated to the same kind of language development class that was given to their daughters or sons. The staff members were eager, it was the beginning of the year. The rooms were colorful and stimulating and the parents were anxious to meet with their children's teachers. It was successful and will be done again next year.

The June final family picnic was a wonderful outing--full of parent interaction, children's free play and the staff's friendly exchange. Thirty-one families participated. The interesting breakdown was to compare the number of nursery school parents in proportion to the number of day-care families. Nine of a possible 26 (under 32%) of nursery school parents took part; 21 of a possible 44 day-care families came (almost 48%). The day-care people were mostly the same who consistently attended the T.G.I.F. punch. It is possible that the large attendance was due to better friendly communication with the staff. It is also possible that sharing play time is as important to adults as it is to children. This gathering was acceptable for day-care parents. Parent workshops were not. It was a time when people cooperated with each other, when children played together without need of oppressive supervision, a time when families shared the breaking of bread and an exchange in friendship. It was a relaxed, unpressured and happy time for over 120 people of varied backgrounds, ages and economic status.

Teachers agreed to work with a parent contact sheet over a six month period. The original form was redesigned by the staff after the third week of recording. Their complete commitment to recording the number of contacts with parents and the quality of those contacts made interesting data available. A contact form was posted in each classroom of the day-care program where it was easily available. New forms were posted monthly. Table 3 demonstrates the type of data collected for each child (see Table 3). The student is represented by a code number preceded by 3, 4 or 5 depending to which age group he belonged; the month is represented by "S" for September and age group by "3" for 3-year-olds. The parent of student number 311 (a member of the 3-year-old

Table 3

Sample of Data Collected on Contact Sheet

Data File = E:S3   Variables = 21   Observations = 14

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	S2	S3	S4	S5	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S15	S16	S17	S18	S19	S22	S23	S24	S25	S26	S29	S30
301	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	0	12	0	2	2
302	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	3
303	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	12	0	5
304	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
305	0	2	2	0	0	2	12	12	12	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	3	3
306	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	0
307	12	3	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
308	0	0	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
309	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	2	12	0	1	1	12	12	12	12	12	12	5
310	0	0	0	0	12	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	12	1	0	0	2
311	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	3	0	3	4	0	0	3
312	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	12	5	0	0	5
313	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	2	2	12	2	0	0	5
314	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	3	5

LEGEND

0. No contact
1. Greeting only
2. Telling parent about project, field trip
3. Explaining on concept being taught
4. Talking about child's behavior
5. Suggesting a referral
6. Phone contact with parent
7. Written contact
8. Talking about child's health/eating habits
9. Home event
12. Absent
14. Withdrawn
15. Not yet enrolled

group) was spoken to by the teacher about the child's behavior two times in the month of September, five times about concepts being taught and once about a projected field trip. From the same table, it shows that another child from the same class, code number 308, was absent 12 days, had no teacher-parent contact for 7 days and on September 16, there was a teacher-parent conversation concerning a concept being taught. There was one contact regarding the necessity of a possible referral.

After six months, all contacts for the 3-year-old groups were correlated. Table 4 shows the percentages of contacts for all 3-year-olds over a six month period (see Table 4). Here one can follow the history of a particular child's parent-teacher contacts. The table demonstrates the number of contacts and the quality as described in the legend. From this table, it is possible to see the percentage of contacts and the types of contacts for the group as a whole.

This type of data was gathered for the 4-year-old and 5-year-old groups over a six month period (see Appendixes E and F). It was necessary then to collect contact data in September for all age groups (see Appendix G) so they could be compared to the same type of data after a six month period. The February data was collected (see Appendix H).

Table 4

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts by Type for Three-Year Olds in a Six Month Period

	Type of Contact									
Student ID	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
301	8.8%	2.6%	2.6%	3.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8.7%	82.5%
302	54.4	22.8	7.0	2.6	3.5	0	0	0	0	35.9	9.6
303	9.6	5.3	.9	0	.9	.9	0	0	0	8.0	82.5
304	51.8	21.9	8.8	.9	5.3	.9	.9	0	0	38.7	9.6
305	55.3	11.4	19.3	1.8	4.4	0	0	0	0	36.9	7.9
306	51.8	23.7	9.6	.9	7.0	0	0	0	0	41.2	7.0
307	39.5	17.5	2.6	.9	12.3	0	0	0	.9	34.2	26.3
308	56.1	14.9	.9	.9	8.8	1.8	0	.9	0	28.2	15.8
309	46.5	18.4	5.3	.9	11.4	1.8	0	.9	0	38.7	14.9
310	38.6	39.5	4.4	0	7.9	0	0	0	0	51.8	9.6
311	27.2	11.4	4.4	4.4	5.3	0	0	.9	0	26.4	46.5
312	51.8	11.4	3.5	.9	7.0	1.8	0	0	0	24.6	23.7
313	26.3	23.7	7.9	1.8	12.3	.9	0	0	0	46.6	27.2
314	31.6	10.5	4.4	1.8	2.6	.9	0	0	0	20.2	48.2
AVG. %	39.24	16.8	5.83	1.71	6.34	.64	0	.19	0	31.44	29.38

LEGEND

0. No contact
1. Greeting only
2. Telling parent about project, field trip
3. Explaining concept being taught
4. Talking about child's behavior
5. Suggesting a referral
6. Phone contact with parent
7. Written contact, talk about home event
8. Talking about child's health/eating habits
9. Compendium of 12, 14, 15
12. Absent
14. Withdrawn
15. Not yet enrolled

When all the data was collected for all children's parents over a period of six months, the first and last months were compared to see if any changes had occurred. The results found definite improvements in parent-staff contacts (see Table 5). Specifically:

Category 0 - No contacts (decreased from September to February).

Category 1 - Greetings (increased).

Category 3 - Explanation of concept being taught (decreased).

Category 5 - Suggestion for referral (decreased).

Category 6 - Phone calls to homes--usually done by the director so there is no data for this category.

Category 7 - Improvement is shown because teacher-written newsletters became a bi-monthly procedure.

All Types of Contact 1 - 8 - Shows 45% improvement over the six month period.

In spite of the flaws of the design of the form, there was a genuine effort by the staff to be more communicative to parents. The results show the success of this endeavor.

The literature states over and over again that parent-teacher partnership is an essential part of any good early childhood education program. The problem is

Table 5

Comparable Percentage of Primary Caregiver Contacts by Type for All Ages in September and February

	Type of Contact									
Month	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
September	56.49	14.50	5.31	6.72	2.80	1.95	0	0	0	20.45	10.62
February	33.29	22.35	6.06	.62	1.02	0	0	8.64	1.62	45.09	15.46

LEGEND

0. No contact
1. Greeting only
2. Telling parent about project, field trip
3. Explaining concept being taught
4. Talking about child's behavior
5. Suggesting a referral
6. Phone contact with parent
7. Written contact, talk about home events
8. Talking about child's health/eating habits
9. Compendium of 12, 14, 15
12. Absent
14. Withdrawn
15. Not yet enrolled

to find ways to establish this partnership. Parent contact sheets were helpful, parent workshops were not and parent conferences did not seem to have any priority.

The parent contact sheets had two purposes for the staff: first, to form a friendly nonthreatening partnership with parents; second, to take an active part in parent education by improving the quality of the contacts. Staff education, to stimulate parent education, was made possible by encouraging and financing the staff's involvement in local area seminars and workshops, by underwriting one staff member for Gesell training and by providing a special onsite three-day workshop led by a professor from a nearby university.

Before the onsite workshops began, the staff answered a rating scale for training objectives form (See Appendix I). This was given to the professor to help him focus on specific staff needs. The rating scale revealed three definite areas of interest. The first was an overwhelming desire to strengthen or refine observation skills; second, a desire to learn how to individualize instruction; and, third, to need to work on behavioral management and control. The staff insisted that the professor observe and take part in the individual classrooms before the general workshop meetings were held. The staff was anxious for constructive, individualized criticism and support rather than a lecture type session which too often generalizes and ignores the real problems of the real workplace. The sessions were held every three or four weeks. Outlines of the previous session were circulated, reference books made available and substitutes usually provided to make teaching staff member attendance possible. The staff was anxious to participate.

Two staff members voluntarily changed their days off to attend and nonteaching staff members took over classroom responsibility during rest hour allowing full participation in the workshop series. The staff's enthusiasm for the training resulted in their request for two additional days from the professor who agreed to extend the three-day series to five days. The goal originally was to have 66% attendance by the teaching staff for the three- (extended to five-) day series. Of the nine staff members, four had 100% attendance. The other five missed only one day each. The absences in two cases were due to sickness, one due to a lack of a substitute, and the other two were absences for out-of-town vacations. The 66% goal was surpassed easily.

With an 88% attendance, the review of the first participant feedback forms was helpful (see Appendix J). There was criticism of the room in which the sessions were held. It was too small and too hot. The room was changed. It was suggested that an outline or summary of the day's session be circulated. This was done by the director after each workshop. Positive comments stated that the professor did not talk above the heads of the staff and, for the most part, he was very impressed and supportive of the staff's work. This positive feedback was most welcomed.

The final evaluation form for the end of the five-week session (see Appendix K) showed a 100% approval of onsite workshops. On a scale of 1 to 10, 88% found the workshops more than helpful (above the 5 rating). The original desire expressed by the staff for training in observational skills was not positively fulfilled. Only 37% found this helpful. Interest in a child-centered curriculum was positively evaluated by 88% of the staff with the same percentage for sharing observations of individual children. There was a divided vote as to whether the professors were clear and precise. There was a very positive reaction to the support and constructive criticism given to the staff as they worked in their own classrooms.

The most interesting comments made at staff meetings referred to the naturalness of the onsite seminar and the helpfulness of exposing one's own workplace. The whole environment was observed, commented on and occasionally challenged. For example, the time-out procedures for an especially difficult boy were changed which helped control his behavior. Teachers felt free to have their opinions verified about children they considered at risk. They were encouraged to provide a child-centered curriculum and were given guidelines to help put it into effect.

The staff's development was encouraged at the weekly staff meetings held by the director. Here, the NAEYC's (National Association for the Education of Young Children) position statement (1986) on developmentally-appropriate practice was given to each member. This was studied to help staff members plan their own programming with the best interests of the child in mind and to strengthen the teacher's own early educational philosophy. The teacher trained at Gesell reported on the readiness concept that Ames and Gesell developed many years ago. The staff exchanged concerns about at risk children and later had them verified by the professor of the onsite workshops. It was here, in the weekly staff meetings, that referrals were suggested and a plan put into action which involved the parent and the public school. It was here that the cultural events program was discussed (see Appendix L). The general consensus was that the goal had been reached to encourage children to be active audience participants. Each program, whether a play, puppet show, brass quintet, story teller or magician found the children very interested (no short attention spans), very involved and responsive. It was voted to plan a similar set of programs for the following year. Parents were always invited. A few could come and did.

All goals for the teachers were met. They improved their own understanding of developmental growth, they shared ideas and concepts with parents and they participated fully with the children in special programs.

Parents were given two questionnaires to fill out with a five month interval between the first and the second (see Appendixes C and D). There was difficulty in comparing the two forms because the wording was not the same and the rating scale was different. In essence, the questions were the same but not in the same numerical order, therefore, adjustments were made to make correlations possible. For example, Form I's questions 1, 4, and 6 were compared to questions 11, 12 and 13 on Form II. Also, Form I's questions 7 and 10 were compared to Form II's question 18 and Form I's question 8 was compared to Form II's question 16.

The results of the comparisons showed a slight improvement in most areas over the five month period.

Parents' approval of:

Children's safety - up from 90% to 97%;

Personal teacher attention to children - up from 80% to 93%;

Expectations for their child - up from 85% to 93%;

Educational philosophy - down from 92% to 85%;

Workshops: one workshop - down from 32% to 26%;
two workshops - down from 64% to 15%;
three workshops - 4% (no change);
zero workshops - up from no report to 56%.

Attendance at parent workshops verified these last figures. Form II's question 15 had no Form I equivalent. The results were strong in continuing the parent punch party with 83% wanting it weekly, 17% monthly and none wanting it eliminated.

It was an important time in the town to try to make changes in the public educational system which operated independently from all the preschool agencies in the area. A new superintendent, new assistant superintendent and one new principal were receptive to personal overtures to build a bridge between the preschool and public school communities.

Directors of all the private nursery schools and day-care centers were invited to join an early education council in order to share common problems in the daily work with young children, search for answers that might help the group collectively (such as insurance problems) and create a mutual support system for preschool education wherever it took place.

The principal of an elementary school offered to host the first meeting of the fledgling council. This friendly gesture was accepted with enthusiasm. The minutes of the first meeting recorded discussion between the two principals of the elementary schools and eight directors in the preschool community. The preschool personnel had great concern for children with special needs who were not handicapped but who needed more time to develop before they had to enroll in a kindergarten class which was academically-oriented. They spoke of concern about the children who were receiving attention in special education classes and who were also attending a preschool. The concern was for the lack of cooperation, reinforcement or continuity between the two learning environments. It was decided that this whole area of special needs required more study and discussion.

In the past, the public school provided preschools with evaluation forms for the incoming kindergarten children. There was a consensus by the preschool personnel that these forms were too academic and did not appropriately reflect the developmental growth and strength of the child. The group decided not to use them. The possibility of devising a new form that was acceptable to public and preschool personnel was discussed.

Preschool directors asked to be included in the kindergarten orientation sponsored by the public schools, to be on the mailing list which informed parents of school closings, conference days and other calendar changes and to have meetings with kindergarten teachers to discuss their programs and expectations for incoming students.

The second meeting for preschool directors only explored the evaluation forms used by different preschools for children going into kindergarten. There was no agreement on a new acceptable format, therefore, no evaluations would be done by anyone in the Spring of 1987.

There was great interest in the possibility of changing the enrollment date for kindergarten children from being 5 years of age by December 31 to being 5 years of age by September 30.

A discussion followed on the admission to the pre-K readiness class. Admitting children in October or

November necessitated their removal from a class and friends already established in September. It was suggested that decisions regarding eligibility for the special class could, in part, be made in the Summer thus avoiding a sense of failure when a child was withdrawn from an assigned classroom.

The concern for cooperative work between public and preschool agencies for special needs children was raised at the third meeting. The public school representation included the Superintendent of Schools, the Assistant Superintendent, two elementary school principals, public school head of special education, social worker and curriculum advisor. The meeting was filled with tension. The lines were clearly drawn between the "professional teachers", as one principal called them, and the preschool personnel. Public schools encouraged remedial work while preschool personnel urged preventive work with children. Funding sources was a big issue for special needs, but it was the different philosophies that made dialogue more difficult. Some common interests were shared: having a reciprocal observation time for public kindergarten teachers and preschool staff members, the favored September cutoff entrance age for kindergarteners, plans for the Week of the Young Child and possible inclusion of preschool teachers in the 1987

August public school week-long workshop.

The following two meetings, held in the elementary school, discussed the format and purpose of the pre-K class by its teacher. Several points were made clear: it was not a special education class, methods and materials differed from regular kindergarten classes, ratio was higher enabling individualized attention, most children would go into transitional kindergarten before first grade; not all who need pre-K will get in--only 15 slots; alternative is an academic-oriented kindergarten. During these weeks, observation schedules were set up and adhered to by public and preschool teachers who exchanged work sites.

The next meeting, involving preschool directors, focused on a combined effort to acknowledge the Week of the Young Child. It was the first time the young people of this town participated in a joint endeavor.

The unprepared, but responsive, preschool teachers kept under 300 children entertained until the entertainer arrived 1/2 hour late. It was a masterful exhibition of spontaneous creativity by adults who knew how to engage in play with children. A chalk-in followed on the sidewalks around the town green. Flowers sprouted from colorful chalk and early education brochures were handed to townspeople as they passed by.

The public schools sent home flyers from the preschool community acknowledging a Week of the Young Child proclamation with the town's First Selectman (see Appendix M) and an article about preschool education appeared on the public school's education page. This cooperative piece was the effort of the Superintendent of Schools and a preschool director. This was a visible sign of possible future cooperative work (see Appendix N).

The previous large joint meeting of public and preschool personnel was strained, uncomfortable and, to some, seemed hostile. The Superintendent of Schools felt this and expressed a desire to lead the next meeting with one idea in mind: to get antagonisms out on the table; try to break down the obvious feelings of separation; and to move on to constructive cooperative work.

Preschool directors met to consolidate their thinking on the idea of any possible partnership with the public schools. Some were reluctant to attend the last meeting of the public school personnel. However, it was decided that most would go to find out if there was any starting point of agreement such as a shared early education philosophy, mutual respect for each other's professionalism and willingness to network on behalf of children needing extra help. They expressed a strong desire to stay together as a preschool group and voted to meet in September for another year, join again for the Week of the Young Child and offer joint workshops for parents.

The final meeting led by the Superintendent of Schools was held in the conference room of the business offices of the public school system. There were six staff members from the public schools and eight from the preschools. The meeting was run smoothly and very much programmed for group work. As the agenda shows (see Appendix O), it was a kind of format used to make things work pleasantly. It probably accomplished its purpose where, as a meeting which allowed more spontaneity might have been more substantive and, of course, more difficult. The results of the positive and negative feelings which one group had for another were interesting. The positive feelings that both groups expressed were: both groups were happy that the other was willing to meet; both approved of the exchange for teacher observations. The public school personnel felt that the preschool personnel were dedicated people, highly qualified, were good for referral advice for placement and special education, had a long track record of service in town, did a good job with children who entered their system and were willing to reach out and cooperate. The negatives about the preschool community were recorded in the following manner: they were telling, not advising, how the public schools should be run, negative communications were given to parents (for example, "try not to get Mrs. X for a teacher"), perceptions of school programs and practices are incorrect (this was followed by three examples: schools are not basically oriented to programs rather than the child as an individual, there is a misconception of the availability of special education services and there is a misunderstanding of special education and its requirements). They felt that the preschools judged the local school system as it had been, not as it is. They felt there is a tendency for the preschools to jump to conclusions from inaccurate information. The preschool responded with fewer positive comments. They were pleased at the public schools' willingness to meet again after the unpleasant prior gathering; that preschoolers were being more involved with the public school through their kindergarten orientation, observation exchanges and a small beginning of networking for children with special needs. The negatives reported were based on a lack of philosophical agreement of early education principles; a lack of respect for work being done in that particular field; a confusion of expectancies between the two elementary schools and what they expected of the incoming students; the lack of communication about PPT's (Planning and Placement Team), referral services, reinforcement for special needs; a lack of notification of special events such as early dismissals, no lunches or bus expulsion for a misbehavior. They expressed a need to be included in appropriate educational workshops given by the public schools.

The comments were all posted and will be addressed at the next meeting which was voted to take place after the Summer break. Preschool personnel were invited to the week-long workshop that will be given in August by the public school.

The development of an Early Education Council has many obstacles to overcome. It is ironic that public schools, now so acceptable for kindergarten children, had once ambitious social goals as they tried to assimilate immigrant and working class children and ameliorate social inequities by improving the child's environment. These ideas reappeared in programs of the 1960's, both in Head Start and in the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and more recently in state preschool (day-care) programs (Marx, Fern O., 1987). The conflicting goals of current policies and programs which, according to Marx, simultaneously view child care as a social service strategy, a child development program, a social utility and an instrument of social change born out of different orientations in the past, need resolution. Certainly, the public mind must change in order to accept day-care as other than relief-oriented, alongside of nursery schools and kindergartens which are firmly linked with education.

Though the initial purpose was to form a cooperative link between the public schools and preschool agencies, other concerns became apparent before the major focus could be addressed. The first meeting resulted in the unexpected pleasure of the preschool directors meeting each other for the first time! Common problems immediately surfaced such as insurance, late payments, fire codes, educational philosophies, parent interaction and the financial strain carried by underpaid staff members. It was an exciting idea that some of these problems could be addressed collectively. As time went on, several cooperative actions were taken: letters to the State Department concerning a legislative insurance bill were sent; some fee scales were compared and changed to bring more conformity; waiting lists were compared; displeasure with the academically-oriented public school kindergarten was expressed. Meetings held in different preschools introduced different environments and different programming concepts, yet all underlined the mutual goal of enriching the lives of preschool children and their diverse needs. It was recognized that working independently and isolated from one another was a separation not to be encouraged or condoned.

The continuity and support for preschool families was enhanced when preschool directors began attending PPT meetings at the public schools. This interaction resulted in unexpected cooperative work between the public school and the Children's Center. Three children with speech difficulty were assigned 1/2 hour a week of speech therapy at the public school. The Center had a speech therapist on staff which made it possible to suggest that two more 1/2 hour periods be added to the public school's weekly program. These extra times took place at the Center, the least restrictive environment, and were paid for by the public school. Parents were thrilled that the "special training" was increased. It also proved to be more consistent because the public schools closed for Holidays, flood days and teacher conferences while the Center remained open.

The lack of cooperative work was exemplified by two special-needs children who were bussed from the Center to the public school and back for special services. The Center never knew what the needs were or how to reinforce any special training.

A third child from another school district was in need of socialization. The Center program was chosen to provide 1/2 day nursery school experience, five times a week, for this boy at the public school's expense. This proved a great success with the Center and the public school able to share plans for the child's program in the public school the following year.

The final augmentation of the Center's special needs program involved enrolling a Downes Syndrome child through the Regional Center. The once a week program, for socialization in a normal setting, proved to be so successful that two other Downes Syndrome children joined. These programs included a special aide and were funded by the Regional Center. A PPT meeting was called by the public school to plan next year's program for one of the children who, by law, was old enough to become the responsibility of the public school system. Supported by the Regional Center personnel and the Children's Center director, the parent insisted that this socialization in a normal setting be continued next year as part of the public school program. In an unprecedented acceptance of this request, the public school agreed to accept the expense of this program with the Children's Center on a once-a-week basis.

The public school's cooperation was welcomed. The goal to have at least one public school child at risk in an alternate site was more than met.

The need for child care advocates never ceased to be felt. Judy Mann (1986) quoted Elkind's statement that children's education remains a victim of political and economic priorities. At the National Convention of the NAEYC in Washington, November 1986, David Elkind, along with Samuel G. Sava, Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, gave two distinct warnings about two trends that are inflicting clear-cut damage on preschoolers: inappropriate, academically-oriented teaching where learning is equated with development and the fast turnover of child care workers which leads to chronic confusion for children and improperly trained teachers. It is necessary for child care advocates to become politically effective by educating local politicians and exposing state and federal representatives to the need for proper funding for preschool children's needs in this country. Hostetler (1984) claims that western culture people are paid because of the value placed on the work they do. The public and policy makers view child care with little worth as represented by a report by the Department of Labor (1977): The skill level of child care workers was rated 677 on a scale from 000--the highest level, to 687--the lowest level; elementary teachers were rated 227. Parking lot attendants and dog groomers were rated at a higher level than child care workers.

Local networking for quality early education must be expanded. The lack of any child care policy in this country does not speak well of the priority that is given for children's needs. The job of the child care advocate is to become active in the public arena and to try to become effective where a thoughtful child-centered legislative process is desperately needed. Child care advocates must continue to press for expanded federal and state dollars for child care the same time considering the new partnerships with the public schools.

The director of the Children's Center has taken beginning steps toward political awareness by working for the local candidate elected last Fall to the State House of Representatives, by introducing a bill into the House regarding unfulfilled state funding commitments to day-care centers, by being on the state mailing list for calendar dates of specific bills in the legislature relating to child care needs, by working on the State Board of Education's task force on a two-year study of 4-Year-Olds in the Public Schools, by helping fund a lobbyist for child care in the state government, by advising the representative in the State Senate about voting for the appropriate child care bills and by being active on the Advisory Council of Directors of 109 state-funded day-care centers. Local and state political impact is important but it must also reach to the federal level. Senator Dodd and Representative Nancy Johnson have both been contacted. A visit from Johnson to the Children's Center was reciprocated by the director attending a luncheon for professional women in Hartford, hosted by Johnson. The director was the only day-care person attending. The director has joined a Day-Care Task Force in a nearby city to explore corporate involvement with child care needs of its employees.

Conclusions

David Elkind (1987) said that he had no solution to the question of how we can capture the attention of parents, administrators and legislators. This past year, the Children's Center, through this practicum, has tried to address just such a question.

Most of the goals were met. There were some exceptions, the Early Education Council has not had time to produce a handbook. This was not even discussed because so much time was spent trying to find the common ground from which the public school and preschool personnel could work.

Parent partnership improved as the staff made more of an effort. A difficulty remains in reaching single parents in the low economic bracket. Webb (1984) did a study of preschool children with working parents and said that there was low level of contact for low-group mothers and their uniform satisfaction with it. This was demonstrated by poor attendance at parent meetings or the lack of desire for personal conferences. In contrast, the T.G.I.F. parent punch and the June picnic were very successful with good participation from low income families. Elkind (1982) suggested that time and play give children an opportunity to work through problems. This is true of adults as well. The idea of party time or picnic time has the much-needed play element that is often lacking in the lives of families living under stress. For an adult, as well as a child, play has a potential healing power by helping one overcome fear and anxiety. Elkind says that play combats abuses of hurrying and pressuring children who then become stressed because they work more than they play. This is true in the world of harried parents. Eighty-three percent of the parents want to continue with the weekly gatherings for punch and fellowship. Playtime for them is as important as it is for children. The Children's Center will try to provide it.

For parents interested in workshops or seminars, these will be provided next year by the Early Education Council. The sense of community as parents from other preschools join might stimulate interest in learning about developmentally-appropriate programs for their children. The parents might feel a strengthening in a support system which considers their children's welfare to be of the utmost importance. The parents themselves will help in the bridging work with the public system as the two agencies try to reconcile the conflicting interests; the needs of parents for child care so they can work; the needs of young children for early education programs which prepare them for future success as students and workers. Through these workshops, through the Early Education Council and from the individual preschools, this type of active parnership can bridge barriers betwen separate disciplines. Then, and only then, a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of both parents and children can be met.

As the staff studied and observed the developmental growth of children, they recognized the conflict between play and the academically-oriented curriculum being offered in many kindergartens and some preschools. It is of great concern that where universal preschool education is launched, that such a massive effort, centered in the public schools, can maintain a scale of operation, both physical environment and in the content and mode of teaching, that it will retain the qualities needed to work effectively with young children. Zimiles (1986) reminds us that the good preschool experience must be expertly conducted with a high adult-child ratio, create an intimate and comfortable environment in settings appropriate for size, with a competent staff trained in Early Childhood Education. He warns us to beware of the current preoccupation with evaluation and accountability which, so far, have not represented an important intrusion and pressure on preschool education. However, achievement testing of preschool children could encourage teaching to the test and slant preschool education toward a didactic and academic focus. This will be an important concept for the Early Education Council to consider.

Parents and preschool teachers could become a threat to the public school system if they demanded a full developmental program for their children. Samuel J. Meisels (1987) has suggested that the process of identification and placement of children has been complicated by basic confusions about screening and readiness tests. Though one Children's Center staff member did train at Gesell, it soon became obvious that the Gesell approach was not necessarily the one and only answer to placement problems. Meisels warns of the misuse of testing abuses. He questions the reliability and validity of many of the screening or readiness tests. He warns of the substitution of readiness tests for screening tests. He reminds one that readiness tests should be used to facilitate curriculum planning, not to identify children who may need special services, intervention or a slower pace in a nonacademic environment. The Gesell response claims their readiness screening test is a valuable tool for recognizing the forces of maturity in each child and thus becomes an effective means to enhance appropriate developmental education. The debate continues and is concerned with whether tests measure maturity--not intelligence or experience; the predictive validity in the Gesell claims of overplaced or not ready children; the use of exclusionary tests that suggest that children should conform to school programs rather than schools adjusting to the needs of children. It is this last problem that is of great concern because so many more younger children will be included in the public school system. Kindergarten teachers have been pressured into implementing academically-oriented programs to prepare children for the heavy academic interest in most first through third grades.

The professional concern of early educators in the new, local Early Education Council must be to question the importance that the public schools place on high achievement test scores and then adopting more academically-oriented elementary curricula ahead of children's needs. Schools should be encouraged not to label children (pre-K, transitional classes), rather devote their time and resources helping teachers fashion an individually-responsive curricula that embraces a wide range of childhood abilities and readiness levels. The position statement of the NAEYC (1985) states unequivocably that "it is the responsibility of the educational system to adjust to the developmental needs and levels of the children it serves; children should not be expected to adapt to an inappropriate system."

If the preschool community and the public school kindergarten personnel, as represented on the Early Education Council, believe in the position statement cited above, it is important to support each other in carrying out that belief through action and program changes. To do less would be unethical and a disservice to the children they serve.

Asa Hilliard is writing a position statement about children as test takers, developmental screening and reading readiness for the NAEYC. This will be of great interest to all who serve children in any setting.

The Child Care Action Campaign (1987) reminds us that we need significant federal involvement to address the national need for high quality early childhood programs. Efforts at the state and local levels remain central to building successful approaches to serving the needs of today's families (see Appendix P). Parents in partnership with preschool teachers and public school personnel can become an effective political tool.

Extended-day kindergarten or 4-year-old admittance to the public school has not come to this town but it is on its way. Many states have programs in place for the 4-year-old in the public system. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation discussed the World of the Child in March, 1983. David Cayley claimed that we face a situation where the care of young children is rapidly being transferred from the informal to the formal economy, becoming in the process just another professional service delivered either by the state or a private corporation. Elkind, at the same broadcast, claimed that the adult world has become too shaky and too confused to provide a secure framework in which children can really be children. Whether the cause is television or adult narcissism, the problem exists: the ecology of adult-child relationships is visibly disintegrating. Kevin Marsh agreed and added that in the sentimental mythology of our society, children hold a high place. In practice, the care of children becomes secondary to our participation in the all important activities of production and consumption. Valarie Suransky not only was worried about the erosion of childhood but the professionalization of the early lives of children as we school the children so that when they reach kindergarten they meet the so-called schooling criteria. She imagines a convivial child-centered type of day-care which involves the parent and which mirrors the informal noninstitutional aspects of daily life.

Cayley mentioned an interesting principle expressed to him by Neil Sutherland, author of a book called The Children of English Canada. After Sutherland studied the debates about children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he found that whenever society is seen as changing or in need of change, child rearing becomes an issue. Women in the labor force have certainly pushed the issue to the forefront today. It was not only the erosion of childhood that concerned panel members but David Elkind's warning that depression in childhood is becoming a very serious syndrome.

Perhaps childhood-remembered is part myth but the childhood of concern today is the time and the space and attention a growing child needs. Societal changes bring children together in settings other than home. For young children, the emotional domain is of primary importance and their developing intellectual abilities are applied first to sorting their feelings. Conflict can be avoided between these two domains if children are allowed to do what comes naturally to them--to play. According to the 1980 Bureau of Census, over 7.5 million preschool children are in day-care centers and millions more wait in the wings for the public school system to take them in when they are 4-years-old. It is of great concern that so many more children will be spending their day in antiplay, prowork environments. Teachers and parents can learn from children's play how best to develop programs and curricula to meet their developmental and existential needs. An article by Rheingold in Practical Applications of Research (1982) warns us against inappropriate and deficient experiences for children based on what adults think children ought to be learning such as reading readiness at age three. The article confirms the worry expressed in this practicum that the present work ethic is far too dominant in early childhood centers and in public school kindergarten programs. It concludes that children's play should not be artificially dichotomized, it should be understood as a dialectical activity that is vital for later development. In the same article, Jerome Singer summarized his own research of the benefits of children's play: sheer fun (a strong motivator for every kind of learning), imagery practice, practicing new vocabulary, persistance--developing a sequenced attention span to follow story lines, self-entertainment and waiting ability, role taking and empathy practice, decentering and advancing cognitive orientation--learning how to get along in the external world, alternate responses to agression, working through conflict, resistance to television addiction, and leadership and cooperation.

It is hoped the parent involvement and teachers' understanding of developmental growth will result in a greater acceptance for childhood where there is no place for failure, for fear of being kept back, for fear of making mistakes. Parent and teacher, both relieved of the necessity to produce intelligent kindergarteners, will create an environment where childhood allows children to develop in their own creative way, satisfying their own curiosity. As the child develops his ability and skills, he will be able, as Holt (1964) suggests, to choose from a smorgasbord list of intellectual, artistic, creative and athletic activities. Childhood protects children from a diet of unbroken failures. We owe children that kind of special nourishment! We are obligated to set the table well.

As more information is transmitted from the council to parents, they too will become involved in advocacy efforts and, hopefully, it will dispel the fear of the political process and lack of confidence in their own expertise (Lombardi, 1986). Parents might suggest adding a representative on the Board of Education from the preschool population.

Parent power in the political arena must increase as long as political priority systems undervalue and undersupport programs which emphasize effective parenting skills, developmental day-care and child care services in general (Honig, 1975). It is also necessary to increase involvement in advocacy efforts on the local, state and national levels in defense of childhood since public school efforts to gather in 4-year-olds has become a national issue.

The implementation of this practicum has given all involved a broader vision of children's needs in the local community. It has stimulated the staff to reassess their own assumptions and knowledge of developmental growth. It put the Center and its director into a working partnership with other educators, parents, legislators, with the community as a whole. It has helped us all to view early education as a distinctive age with appropriate form of group activity that facilitates social development and cognitive exploration. Zimiles (1986) reminds us not to think of early education as the initial lap of a long academic course. It is a time for childhood, for deformalized learning, for exposure not mastery.

It is hoped that before the time this town accepts 4-year-olds into the public school system, there will be an enlightened group of parents and professionals in the field of early education who will insist on quality, playful, unpressured environments for their young people. It is also hoped that public schools and alternate providers of child care will establish a system of communication for mutual concern to benefit the children in their care. It is hoped that local political involvement on early childhood issues will provide impetus for state and national advocacy for children. It is hoped that a whole community will make time for childhood in the home and in the schools.

It is hoped that a whole community will become aware of the needs for quality care for children, that from some quarter, leadership and public awareness will require a major national effort centered on the needs and problems of children in America. In the meantime, a small constituency has begun in this town, which would include parents, teachers, administrators, day-care personnel and local officials ready to join other small child-advocacy organizations who are willing to consider children as an investment and not an expenditure.

The success in meeting the challenges mentioned in this practicum will not be dependent on the amount of money spent, the technology used or the level of intelligence of those involved. Marilyn Smith's closing speech at the convention for the NAEYC (1986) reminds us that the determining factor depends on one thing--the level of generativity, humanness and maturity displayed by each of us in our efforts on behalf of children.

Recommendations

1. The preschool teachers accept the public school's invitation to become involved in the week-long workshop they are providing in August, 1987.

2. The Early Education Council continue working on two levels:

a) as a support for preschool teachers and parents;

b) as a partner with the public schools in areas which have mutual concerns; as well as,

c) consider having a representative of early education on the Board of Education.

3. The Children's Center continue to explore ways to encourage parent partnership, especially through play activities and bimonthly newsletters.

4. The staff continue in their own growth in providing developmentally-appropriate curricula.

5. The Early Education Council produce a handbook on early education resources and services in the community.

6. Continue to encourage advocacy in the field of early childhood in order that more financial support can be garnered from the town, state and federal government.

Dissemination

1. The complete practicum will be kept in the library of the Children's Center. The staff will be encouraged to read it as part of their yearly orientation held late summer before public school begins.

2. The Superintendent of Schools, advisor to this practicum, will be asked to make it available to kindergarten teachers or anyone else in the public system who might find it helpful in furthering the partnership effort between preschools and public schools.

3. The author will offer the State Department of Human Resources time for workshops built on the areas

covered in the practicum. One workshop has already been given to preschool teachers of funded centers entitled "Curricuglum".

4. An increased effort for advocacy will be made by being more active in the Connecticut arm of the NAEYC.

5. Collaboration individually and through the Early Education Council with the public school.

6. Investigation of any possible participation in work to be done through the Bush Center of Child Development and Social Policy for Early Education.

REFERENCES

Almy, M. (1966). Spontaneous play: An avenue for intellectual development. Child Study Center Bulletin, 28(2), pp. 2-15.

Almy, M. (1984). A child's right to play. Childhood Education, 60, p. 350.

Almy, M. (1985, September). New challenges for teacher education, facing political and economic realities. Young Children, pp. 10-11.

Ames, L. B. & Ilg, F. (1979). Your five year old. NY: Dell.

Bernstein, B. (1979). Action, relation and transformation: A study of Viola Spolin's theatre games. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Toronto.

Berruta-Clement, J. R., Schweinhart, L. J., Barnett, W. S., Epstein, A. S. & Weikart, D. P. (1984). Changed lives. High Scope Press.

Bettelheim, B. (1987, March). The importance of play. The Atlantic Monthly, pp. 35-40.

Brett, A. & Rothlein, L. (1987, March). Children's, teacher's and parent's perception of play. In L. G. Katz (Ed.), Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2(1), pp. 45-53.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1983). Family policy and family life: Friends or enemies?. Keynote address of Family Support Systems: The State of the Art. Bush Center on Child Development, New Haven, Connecticut.

Caldwell, B. M. (1977). Child development and social policy. In Grimmet, S. & Scott, M. (Eds.) Current Issues in Child Development, pp. 61-87.

Caplan, F. & Caplan, T. (1983). The early childhood years: The 2 to 6 year old. NY: Pedigree.

Cayley, D. (1983, March 2-23). The world of the child. Canadian Broadcasting Company transcripts, Montreal, Quebec.

Child Care Action News, 4(2) (1987, March-April). Child Care Action Committee.

Children's Defense Fund Report (1986, June). Washington, DC: Author.

Connecticut State Board of Education (1981). Early childhood education policy. Hartford, CT: Author.

Cuffaro, H. (1984, Summer). Microcomputers in education: Why is earlier better? Teacher College Record, 85(4), pp. 559-568.

Elkind, D. (1981) The hurried child. Reading, MA: Adison-Wesley.

Elkind, D. (1982). Child development and early education: Where do we stand today? Young Children, 36, pp. 2-9.

Elkind, D. (1986, May). Formal education and early childhood education and essential difference. Phi Delta Kappa, 631.

Elliot, S. (1986). The role of teacher in children's play. In J. S. McKee (Ed.) Play: Working Partner of Growth. Wheaton, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Galinsky, E. (1986). Investing in quality care. NY: Bank St. College.

Gilmore, T. & Uphoff, J. K. (1986, January). Pupilage at school entrance - how many are ready for success? Viewpoint, Young Children, pp. 11-15.

Goodman, J. & Weinstein, M. (1980). Playfair. California: Impact.

Granger, B. & Granger, H. (1986). The magic feather. NY: E. P. Dutton.

Haiman, P. E. (1986). Viewpoint: There is more to early education than cognitive development. In J. McKee (Ed.), Reducing Stress in Young People's Lives. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Hatfield, L. M. & Sheehan, S. P. (1986, May). Parent information manual: A vital link between home and school. Information Exchange, 49, pp. 29-31.

Hechinger, F. M. (1985, February 26). Looking at quality of child care for its own sake. The New York Times, 5.

Herron, R. E. & Sutton-Smith, B. (1971). Child's play. NY: John Wiley.

Holt, J. (1964). How children fail. NY: Dell.

Holt, J. (1972). Freedom and beyond. NY: E. P. Dutton.

Honig, A. S. (1986, May). Stress and coping in children (part 1). Research in review. Young Children, pp. 50-63.

Honig, A. S. (1986, July). Stress and coping in children. Young Children, pp. 47-59.

Hostetler, L. (1984, January). The nanny trap: Child care work today. Young Children, pp. 76-79.

Hymes, J. L. Jr. (1987, January). Public school for 4 year olds. Young Children, p. 51.

Isenberg, J. & Jacobs, J. (1982). Playthings as learning tools: A parent's guide. NY: John Wiley.

Jaus, H. (1987, April). Education: Kindergarten burnout. Growing Child Research Review, 5(4).

Kagan, S. L. (1984). Parent involvement research: A field in search of itself. Boston, MA: Institute for Responsive Education.

Katz, L. (1986, May). Research on young children and schools. Paper presented at Bush Network Impact Group, Yale University.

Kitzner, J. (1972). Parental involvement: The elixir of change. Planning for action. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Kontos, S. & Wells, W. (1986). Attitudes of caregivers and day-care experience of families. In L. G. Katz (Ed.) Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2(1), pp. 45-53. New Jersey: Ablex.

Lazar, I. & Darlington, R. (1982). Lasting effects of early education: A report from the consortium for longitudinal studies. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 47(2-3).

Lombardi, J. (1986, May). Training for public policy and advocacy. Public policy report. Young Children, pp. 64-65.

Mann, Judy (1986, November 19). The preschooler's plight. The Washington Post.

Martin, H. (1986, June). Tomorrow's kindergarten. Challenge update. Connecticut State Department of Education, 2(3).

Marx, F. O. (1987, March-April). Perspectives on child care. Childcare Action News, 4(2).

McFadden, E. J. (1986). Helping the abused child through play. In J. S. McKee (Ed.) Play: Working Partner of Growth. Wheaton, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

Meisels, S. J. (1987, January). Uses and abuses of developmental screening and school readiness testing. Young Children, pp. 4-9.

Morado, C. (1986). Prekindergarten programs for 4 year olds: Some key issues. Young Children, pp. 61-63.

Morado, C. (1986, May). The bush center's work on schooling for 4 year olds. Paper presented at Bush Network Impract Group. Yale University.

Morgan, G. (1985, May). Programs for young children in public schools? Only if... Young Children, p. 54.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (1985). Position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early education: Programs serving young children from birth through age 8. Washington, DC: Author.

New York Times (1986, July 27).

Parent education catches on as approach to early childhood development (1986, December).

Rheingold, H. (1982, December). Practical applications of research. Newsletter, 5(2). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa's Center on Evaluation, Development and Research.

Rheingold, H. (1982, Spring). Imagination and the importance of daydreaming. Institute of Noetic Science Newsletter, 10(1).

Silin, J. G. (1985, March). Authority as knowledge. Young Children, pp. 41-45.

Smith, M. M. (1987, March). NAEYC at 60: Visions for the year 2000. Young Children, pp. 33-39.

Soderman, A. K. (1984, January). Formal education for 4 year olds? That depends.... Michigan State News Bulletin, 15(11).

Soderman, A. K. (1984, March). Schooling for 4 year olds, an idea full of promise, fraught with pitfalls. Commentary in Education Week, p. 19.

Spolin, V. (1963). Improvisations for the theater. Evanston, IL: University Press.

Suransky, V. P. (1982). The erosion of childhood. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Thomas, R. B. (1987, January). From our readers. Young Children.

Ward, H. D. (1984). Growing up at risk in connecticut. Connecticut Association for Human Services, Inc. & The Junior League of Hartford, Inc.

Webb, W. B. (1984). Preschool children with working parents. NY: University Press of America.

Zigler, E. (1986, May). Formal schooling for 4 year olds. Paper presented at the Bush Network Impact Group, Yale University.

Zigler, E. & Finn, M. (1981). From problem to solution: Changing public policy as it affects children and families. Young Children, 36(4), pp. 31-32, 55-59.

Zigler, E. & Kagan, S. L. (1982). Child development knowledge and education practice: Using what we know. In the Eighty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, (pp. 80-104). University of Chicago Press.

Zimiles, H. (1986, September). Rethinking the role of research: New issues and lingering doubts in an era of expanding preschool education. In L. G. Katz (Ed.) Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 1(3), pp. 189-206.

APPENDIX A

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER
11A ASPETUCK AVENUE
[illegible] CONNECTICUT 06776
(203) 354-1883

TODAY'S DATE ________________

DAILY LOG

Child's Name	Time of Arrival	Adult Signature	Time of Departure	Adult Signature

APPENDIX B

CONTACT SHEET

Teacher's Contact Sheet

PROGRAM NAME: ______________ TEACHER'S NAME: ______________ MONTH OF: ______________

Name	Date																									Comments

1. Greeting only.
2. Telling parent about an immediate project, field trip, or the like.
3. Explaining (and feedback) on concept being taught, etc.
4. Talking with parents regarding a behavior.
5. Conferring with parents regarding a referral.
6. Phone contact.

7. Written contact.
8. Health/eating habits.
9. Home event.

12. Absent.
14. Withdrawn.
15. Not yet enrolled.

0. No contact.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE I

QUESTIONNAIRE #I

Parents:

Because you are the most important people in your child's life, we want to know how you feel about your child at the Children's Center. Please circle the appropriate response.

1. Are you satisfied with the safety of your child at the Center?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor	Needs Improvement	Fair	Good	Excellent

2. Do you have enough contact with your child's teacher?

1 2 3 4 5

The Director?

1 2 3 4 5

Other Staff?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Do you feel welcomed at the Center?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Do you feel that your child gets personal attention?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Do you have enough information about your child's activities?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Do you have expectations for your child's year? Yes ____ No ____

7. Do you understand the educational philosophy of the Children's Center?

Yes ____ No ____

8. Do you want 1, 2, or 3 parent meetings between January and April?

1 2 3

9. If so, would you care to discuss ideas about:

	Yes	No
Discipline?	___	___
Nutrition?	___	___
Developmental growth?	___	___
Children's humor?	___	___
How children learn?	___	___
School readiness?	___	___

10. Did you know that there is a Scholarship Fund at the Center? Yes ____ No ____

11. Have you considered keeping your child back from Kindergarten if he or she doesn't seem ready? Yes ____ No ____

12. Would you feel free to schedule a conference to talk about your child?

Yes ____ No ____

You, our parents, are most important, and the Children's Center wants to support you in any way possible - through conferences, scholarships, referrals, evaluations and counseling.

Signature ______________________
(Optional)

Comments:

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE II

PARENT SURVEY

no. II

DIRECTIONS: Based on your experiences this year, please respond to the following questions by placing a check mark beside the answer which most nearly reflects how you feel.

1. How frequently have you been greeted by your child's teacher or another staff member when you bring your child to the Center?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

2. How frequently has your child's teacher or another staff member talked to you about an impending field trip planned for your child, or a project?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

3. How often does your child's teacher give you feedback and explain to you some of the concepts being taught to your child?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

4. How often has your child's teacher spoken to you about your child's behavior (both good and poor)?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

5. How frequently has the Center staff contacted you for any reason by telephone:

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

6. How often has the Center staff contacted you in writing about your child?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

7. How frequently has the Center staff spoken to you about the health of eating habits of your child?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

8. Does your child's teacher or any other staff member ever talk to you about events happening to your child at home?

_____ a. Frequently
_____ b. Sometimes
_____ c. Rarely
_____ d. Never

9. Has the Center ever conferred with you regarding a referral for your child?

a. Frequently
b. Sometimes
c. Rarely
d. Never

10. To what extent does the Center keep you informed about your child's activities?

____ a. To a large extent
____ b. Moderate extent
____ c. Minimal extent
____ d. Hardly at all

11. To what extent are you satisfied with your child's safety at the Center?

____ a. To a large extent
____ b. Moderate extent
____ c. Minimal extent
____ d. Hardly at all

12. To what extent are you satisfied with the personal attention your child receives at the Center?

a. To a large extent
b. Moderate extent
c. Minimal extent
d. Hardly at all

13. To what extent have the expectations you had for your child for this year been fulfilled?

____ a. To a large extent
____ b. Moderate extent
____ c. Minimal extent
____ d. Hardly at all

14. To what extent do you feel free to schedule a conference with the teacher to discuss your child's progress, etc.?

a. To a large extent
b. Moderate extent
c. Minimal extent
d. Hardly at all

15. Would you like to see the [illegible] Parent Pouch continued?

____ a. Weekly
____ b. Monthly
____ c. Quarterly
____ d. Not at all

16. How many of the parent conferences did you attend between January and April this year?

____ a. Three
____ b. Two
____ c. One
____ d. None

. . . .

IF YOU CHECKED a - b - c FOR QUESTION #16 ABOVE, ANSWER #17. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO #18.

17. What topics were discussed at your parent conferences? (Check as many as apply).

____ Children's humor
____ Developmental growth
____ Discipline
____ How children learn
____ Nutrition
____ School readiness
____ NONE of the above
____ Other: (specify)

____

____

18. Rate how much information you have about each of the following items:

	A lot	[illegible]	None
Scholarship Fund at Center			
Educational Philosophy of Center			
Center Newsletter			

COMMENTS: Please feel free to use the space provided below to write any additional comments you may want to share.

THANK YOU

FILMED FROM
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX E

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts by Type for Four-Year Olds in a Six-Month Period

Student ID	Type of Contact 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
401	46.5%	31.6%	3.5%	4.4%	3.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	43.00%	10.5%
402	57.9	27.2	3.5	2.6	1.8	0	0	0	0	35.10	7.0
403	64.9	11.4	.9	0	6.1	.9	0	2.6	0	21.90	13.2
404	60.5	24.6	.9	1.8	7.0	.9	.9	0	0	36.10	3.5
405	51.8	18.4	5.3	1.8	5.3	0	0	0	.9	31.70	16.7
406	75.4	5.3	0	3.5	4.4	.9	0	0	.9	15.00	9.6
407	5.3	0	0	.9	0	0	0	0	0	.9	93.9
408	34.2	15.8	1.8	2.6	0	.9	0	0	0	21.10	44.7
409	37.7	27.2	1.8	2.6	13.2	2.6	0	.9	.9	49.20	13.2
410	61.4	20.2	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	22.0	14.0
411	48.2	24.6	.9	4.4	11.4	0	0	0	.9	42.20	9.6
412	57.0	20.2	.9	2.6	8.8	1.8	.9	.9	.9	37.0	6.1
413	64.0	13.2	6.1	1.8	3.5	1.8	1.8	0	0	28.20	7.9
414	64.0	23.7	2.6	2.6	.9	1.8	0	0	0	31.60	4.4
415	59.6	4.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.4	36.0
Avg. %	52.56	17.95	2.00	2.11	4.39	.77	.24	.29	.30	27.96	19.35

LEGEND

0-No contact
1-Greeting only
2-Telling parent about immediate project or field trip
3-Explaining concept being taught
4-Talking with parent regarding child's behavior
5-Suggesting a referral
6-Phone contact with parent
7-Written contact with parent, talking about home event
8-Talking with parent about child's health/eating habits
9-Composite of 12, 14, 15
12-Absent
14-Withdrawn
15-Not Yet Enrolled

APPENDIX F

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts by Type for Five-Year Olds in a Six-Month Period

Student ID	Type of Contact									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
501	22.8%	53.5%	13.2%	.9%	0%	0%	0%	3.5%	2.6%	73.70%	3.5
502	65.8	22.8	1.8	.9	.9	0	0	3.5	0	95.70	4.4
503	32.5	39.5	7.9	1.8	1.8	0	0	4.4	0	55.40	12.3
504	50.0	27.2	9.6	.9	0	0	0	5.3	0	43.00	7.0
505	30.7	39.5	12.3	1.8	3.5	0	0	3.5	1.8	62.40	7.0
506	28.1	50.9	9.6	.9	0	0	0	1.8	0	63.20	8.8
507	42.1	30.7	11.4	.9	0	0	0	.9	0	43.90	14.0
508	20.2	43.9	14.0	1.8	7.9	0	0	10.5	.9	79.00	.9
509	23.7	43.0	6.1	.9	0	0	0	6.1	0	55.20	20.2
510	28.1	42.1	12.3	1.8	.9	0	0	2.6	0	48.63	12.3
511	29.8	36.0	8.8	2.6	.9	0	0	13.2	2.6	64.10	6.1
512	57.9	22.8	8.8	0	.9	0	0	4.4	.9	37.80	4.4
513	23.7	53.5	7.0	1.8	2.6	.9	0	7.0	.9	73.70	2.6
514	67.5	16.7	4.4	.9	.9	0	0	7.0	.9	30.80	1.8
515	36.0	44.7	7.0	1.8	0	0	0	3.5	0	57.0	7.0
516	32.5	32.5	11.4	2.6	2.6	0	0	6.1	0	52.60	12.3
Avg. %	36.96	37.46	9.10	1.39	1.43			5.21	.66	58.51	7.79

LEGEND

0-No contact

1-Greeting only

2-Telling parent about immediate project or field trip

3-Explaining concept being taught

4-Talking with parent regarding child's behavior

5-Suggesting a referral

6-Phone contact with parent

7-Written contact with parent, talking about home event

8-Talking with parent about child's health/eating habits

9-Compounding of 12, 14, 15

12-Absent

14-Withdrawn

15-Not Yet Enrolled

APPENDIX G

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts In September by Type For All Age Groups (N=44)

Student ID	Type of Contact 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
301	47.6%	14.3%	14.3%	19.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	47.6%	4.8%
302	66.7	9.5	4.8	14.3	4.8	0	0	0	0	33.4	0
303	52.4	28.6	4.8	0	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	33.0	4.8
304	71.4	19.0	4.8	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	28.6	0
305	42.9	4.8	28.6	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	42.9	14.3
306	90.5	0	0	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	0	9.6	0
307	28.6	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	4.8	66.7
308	33.3	0	0	4.8	0	4.8	0	0	0	9.6	57.1
309	38.1	9.5	4.8	4.8	0	9.5	0	0	0	27.6	33.3
310	57.1	23.8	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	33.3	9.5
311	61.9	0	4.8	23.8	9.5	0	0	0	0	38.1	0
312	66.7	0	0	4.8	14.3	9.5	0	0	0	28.6	4.8
313	38.1	23.8	23.8	4.8	0	4.8	0	0	0	57.2	4.8
314	57.1	14.3	9.5	9.5	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	42.9	0
401	47.6	14.3	14.3	19.0	0	0	0	0	0	47.6	4.8
402	66.7	9.5	4.8	14.3	4.8	0	0	0	0	33.4	0
403	52.4	28.6	4.8	0	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	43.0	4.8
404	71.4	19.0	4.8	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	28.6	0
405	42.9	4.8	28.6	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	42.9	14.3
406	90.5	0	0	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	0	9.6	0
407	28.6	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	4.8	66.7
408	33.3	0	0	4.8	0	4.8	0	0	0	9.6	57.1
409	38.1	9.5	4.8	4.8	0	9.5	0	0	0	28.6	33.3
410	57.1	23.8	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	33.3	9.5
411	61.9	0	4.8	23.8	9.5	0	0	0	0	38.1	0
412	66.7	0	0	4.8	14.3	9.5	0	0	0	28.6	4.8
413	38.1	23.8	23.8	4.8	0	4.8	0	0	0	57.2	4.8
414	57.1	14.3	9.5	9.5	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	42.9	0

(Continued)

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts in September by Type for all Age Groups (N=44)

Student ID	Type of Contact 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
501	57.1%	38.1%	0%	4.8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	42.9%	0%
502	66.7	14.3	0	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	0	23.9	9.5
503	61.9	28.6	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	33.4	0
504	61.9	19.0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	23.8	14.3
505	66.7	23.8	0	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	33.3	0
506	76.2	19.0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	23.8	0
507	57.1	33.3	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	38.1	0
508	52.4	14.3	9.5	4.8	19.0	0	0	0	0	47.6	0
509	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
510	71.4	9.5	0	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	19.0	9.5
511	57.1	28.6	4.8	4.8	4.8	0	0	0	0	43.0	0
512	85.7	14.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	0
513	57.1	33.3	0	9.5	0	0	0	0	0	42.8	0
514	76.2	19.0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	23.8	0
515	66.7	28.6	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	33.4	0
516	66.7	19.0	0	9.5	4.8	0	0	0	0	33.3	0
Avg. %	56.49	14.50	5.31	6.72	2.80	1.95	0	0	0	30.95	10.62

LEGEND

0-No contact	6-Phone contact with parent
1-Greeting only	7-Written contact with parent, talking about home event
2-Telling parent about immediate project or field trip	8-Talking with parent about child's health/eating habits
3-Explaining concept being taught	9-Compendium of 12, 14, 15
4-Talking with parent regarding child's behavior	12-Absent
5-Suggesting a referral	14-Withdrawn
	15-Not Yet Enrolled

APPENDIX H

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts In February by Type For All Age Groups (N=45)

	Type of Contact										
Student ID	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
301	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
302	38.9	22.2	22.2	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	50.0	11.1
303	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
304	44.4	16.7	11.1	5.6	5.6	0	5.6	0	0	44.6	11.1
305	44.4	16.7	16.7	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	50.10	5.6
306	22.2	38.9	16.7	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	66.70	11.1
307	33.3	27.8	5.6	0	16.7	0	0	0	5.6	55.70	11.8
308	66.7	11.1	0	0	11.1	0	0	5.6	0	27.80	5.6
309	33.3	0	0	0	33.3	0	0	5.6	0	38.90	27.8
310	27.8	50.0	5.6	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	66.70	5.6
311	16.7	16.7	22.2	0	16.7	0	0	5.6	0	61.20	22.2
312	61.1	22.2	5.6	0	5.6	0	0	0	0	33.40	5.6
313	22.2	44.4	16.7	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	72.20	5.6
314	33.3	27.8	16.7	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	55.60	11.1
401	55.6	27.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27.80	16.7
402	50.0	22.2	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	27.80	22.2
403	50.0	5.6	0	0	5.6	0	0	11.1	0	22.30	27.8
404	38.9	33.3	0	0	22.2	0	0	0	0	55.50	5.6
405	22.2	33.3	0	0	5.6	0	0	0	5.6	44.80	33.3
406	66.7	11.1	0	5.6	5.6	0	0	0	5.6	27.90	5.6
407	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
408	11.1	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	72.2
409	38.9	33.3	0	0	11.1	0	0	5.6	5.6	55.60	5.6
410	66.7	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	16.7
411	16.7	44.4	0	0	22.2	0	0	0	5.6	72.2	11.1
412	33.3	55.6	0	0	5.6	0	0	0	5.6	66.80	0
413	77.8	11.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.10	11.0
414	77.8	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.70	5.6
415	27.8	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.60	66.7

Percent of Primary Caregiver Contacts In February by Type For All Age Groups (N=45)

Student ID	Type of Contact 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total 1-8	9
501	5.6%	38.9%	22.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22.2%	5.6%	88.90%	5.6%
502	27.8	44.4	5.6	0	0	0	0	22.2	0	72.20	0
503	11.1	22.2	0	5.6	0	0	0	16.7	0	44.50	44.4
504	27.8	27.8	0	0	0	0	0	27.8	0	55.60	16.7
505	33.3	11.1	16.7	0	5.6	0	0	16.7	5.6	55.70	11.1
506	16.7	44.4	11.1	0	0	0	0	11.1	0	66.60	16.7
507	38.9	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	5.6	0	16.70	44.4
508	11.1	22.2	11.1	0	11.1	0	0	38.9	5.6	88.9	0
509	0	61.1	0	0	0	0	0	33.3	0	94.40	5.6
510	27.8	27.8	11.1	0	0	0	0	5.6	0	44.50	27.8
511	5.6	0	5.6	5.6	0	0	0	44.4	11.1	66.70	27.8
512	27.8	16.7	5.6	0	5.6	0	0	22.2	5.6	55.70	16.7
513	33.3	33.3	11.1	0	0	0	0	22.2	0	66.60	0
514	61.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	33.3	5.6	38.90	0
515	55.6	16.7	5.6	5.6	0	0	0	11.1	0	39.00	5.6
516	16.7	11.1	11.1	0	0	0	0	22.2	0	44.40	38.9
Avg. %	33.29	22.35	6.06	.62	1.02	0	0	8.64	1.62	45.09	15.46

LEGEND

0-No contact
1-Greeting only
2-Telling parent about immediate project or field trip
3-Explaining concept being taught
4-Talking with parent regarding child's behavior
5-Suggesting a referral
6-Phone contact with parent
7-Written contact with parent, talking about home event
8-Talking with parent about child's health/eating habits
9-Compendium of 12, 14, 15
12-Absent
14-Withdrawn
15-Not Yet Enrolled

RATING SCALE FOR TRAINING OBJECTIVES EARLY CHILDHOOD

Please rate each topic under column A or B; rate column C 1st, 2nd, and 3rd only.

TOPIC	A Strength	B Refining	C Topic for Training
1. Development during years 3 to 5.			
2. Observing children's functioning.			
3. Working w/families.			
4. Behavioral management and control.			
5. Evaluating the environment.			
6. Working as a team.			
7. Curriculum issues for ages 3-5 years.			
8. Individualizing instruction.			
9. Additional topics.			

APPENDIX J

Participant Feedback Form

(End of Workshop)

Date____

Your Job Title____________________________________

Please check the line which best describes your previous training

_____have had little or no training

_____have had some formal training (i.e., a workshop, a college course, etc.)

_____have had on-the-job training

_____have had extensive training

To help us make this workshop as useful as possible to you, we would appreciate your reacting briefly to today's activities in each of the general areas listed below. Please be candid in expressing your feelings, whether they are positive or negative. Please do not sign your name unless you have a particular reason for doing so. Use the back of this sheet if you need additional space to answer any questions.

1. CONTENT of today's session (please be specific, if your comment does not apply to all the content).

2. PRESENTATION techniques used (if your comment does not apply generally, please specify the media, instructional technique, or person about whom you are commenting).

3. TIME and PACING of today's sessions (please be specific if your comments apply only to portions of the session).

4. FACILITIES and ARRANGEMENTS (please be specific if your comment does not apply generally).

5. Specifically, what did you like most about the workshop?

6. Specifically, what did you like least about the workshop?

7. What changes could be made to the workshop to make it more worthwhile?

APPENDIX K

FINAL EVALUATION FORM

TO: All Teaching Staff
DATE: June 15, 1987
FROM: Barbara B. Hamlin
RE: David Smith Seminars

Please critique Dr. David Smith's seminars in the following areas. I'd like to have your responses on my desk by Wednesday, June 17th, please.

1. Arranging and equipping your room:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NOT at all helpful — helpful — EXTREMELY helpful

2. The child-centered curriculum:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Developing observation skills:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Sharing observations of individual children:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Are on-site workshops valuable: ________yes ________no

6. Were the seminars presented in a precise and concise manner? ________yes ________no

7. Any suggestions on how to improve the seminars?:

APPENDIX L

CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAM

CULTURAL EVENTS

SPONSORED BY THE MESERVE FOUNDATION

1986 - 1987

September 17	Monday	10:00 a.m.	LaFond School of Ballet Movement Workshops
September 22	Monday	10:00 a.m.	Gruppet Puppet
September 30	Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Sunny Valley Farm Bus Trip
October 13	Monday	10:00 a.m.	Eliot Pratt's Critter Caravan
October 27	Monday	3:30 p.m.	String Quartet
November 10	Monday	10:00 a.m.	Play: Anansi the Spider Grumpling Gryphons
November 19	Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Pow-Wow w/Howling Wolf
December 11	Thursday	10:00 a.m.	Bill Lauf - Folk Singer
January 13	Tuesdays		LaFond Movement
January 15	Thursday	10:00 a.m.	Blumpy Bear
February 9	Monday	10:00 a.m.	Moira Vecchia Storyteller
March 4	Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Children's Dance Theatre
April 6	Monday	10:00 a.m.	Week of the Young Child Folksinger
April 24	Friday	10:00 a.m.	Moira Vecchia Storyteller
June			West Side Brass

APPENDIX M

PROCLAMATION FOR WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

Staff photograph by DEANNE L SHECK

ew Milford First Selectman Cliff Chapin, center, and Superintendent of chools Dr. Stephen Tracy, left, joined Children's Center Director Barbara Hamlin about 25 kids at the Children's Center Tuesday morning. Chapin was to sign a proclamation officially declaring April 5-12 The Week of the Young Child

Week of the Young Child gives kids priority

y Lynda Wellman
AFF REPORTER

There is an urgent need for more ch quality early childhood ograms, according to Barbara amlin.

"This country doesn't have a iority for kids," said Hamlin, rector of the Children's Center nd spokesperson for the newly reated Early Education Council EC).

The National Association for the ducation of Young Children NAEYC) documents the urgent eed. Although early childhood rograms are now part of the merican mainstream, they estimate by 1990 more than 12 million children under the age of six will require child care services.

First Selectman Clifford Chapin signed a proclamation Tuesday designating next week, April 5-11, as the Week of the Young Child.

The week is sponsored locally by the EEC and nationally by the NAEYC to focus attention on the needs of young children and their families.

Approximately 200 area preschoolers will be walking or traveling by bus to St. John's Episcopal Church to hear storyteller Queen Saundra Staunton Monday.

Youngsters will also participate in a "chalk-in" – drawing on the sidewalks along the Green.

Hamlin said the chalk-in would be a "fun thing for kids" while drawing attention to local needs.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Stephen Tracy said the EEC has representation from area preschools and the school administration.

The council was formed to share information and cooperate on programs said Tracy.

Hamlin said the EEC "serves as a bridge with the public schools" in part to ease the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

Hamlin is a strong believer in preserving childhood.

"Kids need time to be kids; they shouldn't be hurried," said Hamlin.

"If parents let a kid develop on his schedule and not the parents' or the schools' it would be wonderful."

Child care should have a national priority, said Hamlin, who added needs are as great as most places in the country."

She cites waiting lists at all area preschools to indicate the immediate requirements of unserved children.

"There is nothing for babies," Hamlin said. "Infant care is conspicuous by its absence."

People are calling before they sign a contract for a house to see if child care is available.

Part of the problem is the "lousy status and terrible pay" those who work in the child field, Hamlin said.

The Department of H Resources lists an entry-level month salary at $14,500 for 87, for a teacher with childhood education training.

Entry level teachers, in the public schools, for 19 are paid $[illegible],700, for a contr less than [illegible] months.

The state is becoming awa the problem, but Hamlin ca many of the legislative prop including all-day kindergarten a "smoke screen" for easy tions to day care problems.

"Unless a program is fo benefit of children, we should it," said Hamlin.

APPENDIX N

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION ARTICLE

[redacted]G CHILDREN ARE [redacted] FUTURE

by Barbara Hamlin and Stephen Tracy

In recent months, [redacted] Nursery and Pre-schools have been exploring new ways that they can work together with the Public Schools to better serve the families and children of our community. As a part of that spirit of cooperation, and in honor of the Week of the Young Child, we want to share some thoughts about the developmental and educational needs of New Milford's youngest citizens.

Preschoolers need time to explore their world, to learn about themselves, to develop skills, and to take risks without fear of failure. Good quality preschools can offer young children a rich learning environment which will provide these opportunities.

Nursery schools are not a new idea. Many years ago, [redacted] had Miss Barton's Nursery School. Now, with changes in family patterns and with more and more mothers working outside of the home, many nursery schools and child care centers have opened in our town. The sad fact is that each of these places has a waiting list. The number of unserved children grow daily, not just in New Milford but nationally.

The Week of the Young Child, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is meant to draw attention to the needs of our preschool population as well as to give tribute to those dedicated preschool teachers who serve the lucky few who are in their care.

There is cause for concern. In some areas, all day Kindergarten and the formal education of 4-year olds is already a reality in the public schools. In considering such programs, we must ask whether they are simply a convenient response to the need for quality day care, or a responsible way of meeting the developmental needs of children.

The concern for the proper care of the young must become a national as well as a local priority. Public school systems and preschool leaders must work together to form a network of services for children and their families. Since many of life's most critical lessons are learned long before a child enters Kindergarten, it is incumbent upon educators and parents to cooperate in providing young children with a continuum of positive, stimulating experiences from life's very beginning.

The formative years of childhood can be a time of incredible growth and learning if our young children are nurtured by good preschool programs, good home day care, and a thoughtful transition to quality primary grade education in the public schools. It is our responsibility as parents and citizens to provide these opportunities for children. In a very real sense, they represent more of an investment than an expense.

Mrs. Hamlin is the Director of the Children's Center [redacted].
Dr. Tracy is Superintendent of the [redacted] Public School System.

- Times April 16, 1987 - Article

APPENDIX D

EARLY EDUCATION COUNCIL AGENDA

Early Education Council

Meeting of June 11, 1987

East Street School
50 East Street, Connecticut

1:00 - 2:30 pm

AGENDA

Purpose of Meeting

Overview of Process

Step 1: Pre-School and Public School Groups Meet Separately

Tasks:

1. List positives about the other group.
2. List your criticisms about the other group.
3. List the positives and negatives that you think the other group will write about you.

Step 2: Entire Group Together

Tasks:

1. Share "positive" lists -- discuss
2. Share "criticism" lists -- discuss

Step 3: Entire Group Together

Task: Develop a "statement of purpose" for the Early Education Council.

TWENTY-EIGHT FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 1986 THE COUNTY TIMES

State Task Force: Keep 4-Year-Olds Out of Classroom

By S. HOGAN-GEREG

Four-year-old children don't belong in the classroom; instead schools need to forge better ties with nursery and day-care centers and parents to improve pre-school programs and smooth the transition into kindergarten.

These were among the findings of a recently completed two-year study conducted by the Connecticut Committee on Four-Year-Olds, Their Families and the Public Schools. The task force, appointed by the state Board of Education, was comprised of educators, legislators and child care providers. Barbara Hamlin, director of the Children's Center in was one of the members.

Last week, task force representatives presented their final "Early Childhood Initiative" package to the state Board of Education which calls for $12 million in early childhood programs, including a $3 million grant program for schools that develop programs linking pre-school centers to their communities. Another $2 million would be devoted to creating a model demonstration center in the state which would formulate and test "the best, most developed programs for pre-school children," explained Betty Sternberg, director of curriculum and professional development for the state Department of Education. The package, if approved by the state board, could reach the legislature by fall as part of an overall state education budget of just over $1 million, according to Mrs. Sternberg.

"The recommendation that came out of the report was simple—give parents and children alternate choices," said Barbara Hamlin of the Children's Center in [redacted] The development of a universal program for 4-year-olds "could've been a smoke screen for [state run] day care," said Mrs. Hamlin. "You should have a choice where you send your children," she said.

Mrs. Hamlin said she supports the recommendation of the task force which calls for better communication between day-care centers and schools. "Continuum is very important in a child's life. We get to know them very well," she said. Not to pass information about a child onto his or her next school can be disruptive to the child, she said.

Stephen Tracy, Superintendent of Schools in [redacted], said he agreed with the task force's recommendation not to formalize education for 4-year-olds. "I'd be very reluctant to further institutionalize childhood," he said. "With more parents working and kids in day care earlier in life, we're not doing them any favors by compelling them to come to school earlier. Most kids would do better with another year in the backyard in the sand box," he added.

The task force was organized at the request of state education commissioner Gerald N. Tirozzi, said Sharon L. Kagan of the Bush Center for Child Development and Special Policy at Yale University, who chaired the group. Members were charged with responding to two developments she noted—the fact that an unprecedented number of children are now attending day-care centers in Connecticut; and the emphasis by both parents and educators on high quality, consistent early education programs.

"I think the consensus [of the task force] was let's expand and develop services already available" for pre-schoolers, specifically 4-year-olds, said Mrs. Sternberg. The concept of mandatory 4-year-old kindergarten was "never something we considered, never the intent" of the task force, said Mr. Sternberg. "Because the [preliminary] report said 'pre-school education' people immediately thought—'kindergarten for 4-year-olds,' " she said.

The task force found that the needs of Connecticut's 4-year-olds—in a state with a wide spectrum of economic incomes—were so diverse that no one program would suit all of their needs, according to Ms. Kagan. "Four-year-olds do not necessarily all have to be in a kindergarten [environment]," she said. "There should be options—parents should make that decision."

The current American system of child care "is complex enough," continued Ms. Kagan, with the "systematic involvement of the public schools." The exception, she said, are programs for all low-income, handicapped and non-English speaking children. One part of the proposed $12 million early childhood spending package would include $1 million for public and private centers to work with handicapped and high risk youngsters, birth to 3 years old, in their homes.

Superintendent Tracy [redacted] expressed his opinion that "a lot of training and development of [teaching] staff could be done in cooperation with early childhood educators. There's no reason we couldn't combine our efforts," he said.

Just how to go about doing that "is the $60 million question," said Betty Sternberg. "It's not going to happen without some kind of push," she added, referring to the proposed grant package that would create "financial incentives" for schools to start up liason programs with day-care facilities.